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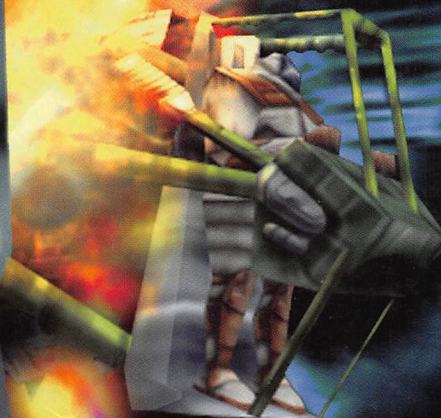
Gamers' Republic

COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

PREMIERE ISSUE
no. 1

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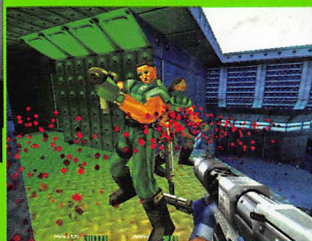
TUROK 2



METAL GEAR SOLID



SIN



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**"WANDERING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, ONE
DEAD, THE OTHER POWERLESS TO BE BORN."**
THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE



Windows® 95
PC CD-ROM

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YOU...

OR SET YOU FREE.

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SANCTUARY

Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

**PUBLISHER'S
LOG 1.0**



On the brink of my second foray into video game publishing after six years in the business, I'm taking all that I've learned... and throwing it out the window.

Gamers' Republic is all about change. Changes in publishing, changes in gaming, changes in you, and changes in us. The video game industry is in a state of permanent evolution and currently sits on the brink of 64-bit technology. As new hardware makes possible impeccable graphics, game development will have come full circle. The limitations of 8-bit technology forced designers to create new game-play experiences, enveloped by creative stories and characters. Now, amazing graphics will become commonplace, positioning the emphasis back on those very same principles. The result will be an entirely new breed of video game where the only limit is the imagination. That new breed of game needs a new breed of magazine, and if we've fulfilled our initial goal, you're looking at exactly that. *Gamers' Republic* is about what's new and exciting about gaming and all that goes with it, written and produced by a bunch of people who care about nothing more. Like any new endeavor, bugs will need to be worked out, letters sent and answered, and soon our internet site will arise providing a forum for all of the above. We're glad to be back, unmasked.

Dave Halverson

Welcome to the Republic. *Gamers' Republic* is now ready to provide the discerning reader (whether a casual reader or insatiable gaming junkie) with a wealth of gaming information in the most descriptive, witty and downright entertaining manner possible. As well as lavish and groundbreaking design, *Gamers' Republic* is set to furnish the video gamer with unparalleled detail in our extensive features, expert reviews and the latest news from around the world. *Gamers' Republic* is set to provide superior screenshots, intelligent and interesting text, evocative and vibrant page layouts and a whole host of extra features to ensure you, the reader, need not look elsewhere for gaming information. We're particularly happy with the results, and we hope you are as well. Obviously, with a magazine launch, various aspects of this volume are set to change and morph slightly over the coming months, in this is where you come in (as the magazine is designed and written entirely for your enjoyment). We want and need your input to ensure that future issues of *Gamers' Republic* continue to meet our and your highest of requirements. So write in or email me with any opinions (good, bad or ugly) and we'll react accordingly. In the mean time, enjoy our first issue. Game on!

David Hodgson

1. a magazine in which the supreme power rests on the body of the readership entitled to further their gaming knowledge, exercised by representatives chosen directly or indirectly by them.

2. any body of persons viewed as a commonwealth of ultraistic and voracious video gamers.

3. A philosophical dialogue dealing with the composition and structure of the gaming genre and all sub-divisions.

4. A monthly gaming publication encapsulating lavish presentation, entertaining prose and in-depth information on the subject of video and PC games.

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FALLOUT, GAMERS' REPUBLIC,
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EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

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DISTRIBUTION CONSULTANT

BRIAN POCKETT

TELEPHONE 760.740.0779

SPECIAL THANKS:

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MADE IN THE USA.

Gamers' Republic
COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY:

MILLENNIUM PUBLICATIONS INC.

GAMERS' REPUBLIC

WELCOME TO GAMERS' REPUBLIC - ISSUE 1 - JUNE 1998

FORSAKEN

FORSAKEN .14

POSSIBLY THE MOST DAZZLING VISUALS EVER SEEN IN A PC GAME COMBINE WITH INTENSE AND CLAUSTROPHOBIC LEVEL DESIGN. WE UNCOVER THIS SPECTACULAR 360° BLASTING MONSTROSITY IN DETAIL, ALONG WITH A PROBE INTO THE MAKING OF THE GAME.

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LUXOFLUX PROVIDE TWISTED METAL FANS WITH WHAT THEY CRAVE... CAR COMBAT WITH ALMOST CONSTANT CARNAGE! TRULY STUNNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE REVEALED, AS WELL AS A CHAT WITH THE TEAM.

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A RITUAL OF LABOR IS FINALLY NEARING COMPLETION. A FIRST-PERSON GIBBING FESTIVAL USING THE QUAKE 2 ENGINE WITH ENHANCED GRAPHICAL EFFECTS TO BEAT ID'S MASTERPIECE. MEET THE TEAM, CHAT TO THE LEVELORD AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT LEVEL IN 3D CORRIDOR GAMES...

THE MOST EAGERLY-AWAITED PLAYSTATION GAME OF THE YEAR HAS FINALLY RECEIVED AN INITIAL GAMERS' REPUBLIC PLAYTESTING IN JAPAN. WE REPORT ON THE GROWING METAL GEAR SOLID PHENOMENON...

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FRONTLINES

SEGA SCOOP - KATANA HARDWARE INFO...

As we approach this year's E3, Sega is at the center of much speculation regarding the impending release of their next 'next generation' hardware.

The prospect of true 64-bit power at home is enticing to say the least. Especially when one considers the potential of a Sega-developed system powerful enough to handle Model 3 (or *Naomi*) translations effortlessly.

Now that gamers everywhere are finally getting a taste of 3dfx performance on their PCs, the 3D bar has been raised. Home systems are slowly becoming obsolete as hardcore gamers rush to take advantage of the million-plus polygon performance and incredible on-line gaming offered by PCs. Sega's *Katana* is supposedly capable of matching or surpassing the benchmark set by *Voodoo 2*, and according to sources all over the industry, it will also come equipped with a built-in modem. What does this mean to you and me? The beginning of arcade-quality on-line console gaming. While no information was available regarding the exact specifications of the *Katana* modem (i.e., the speed and support), it will be an option for every developer currently in the process of creating *Katana* software.

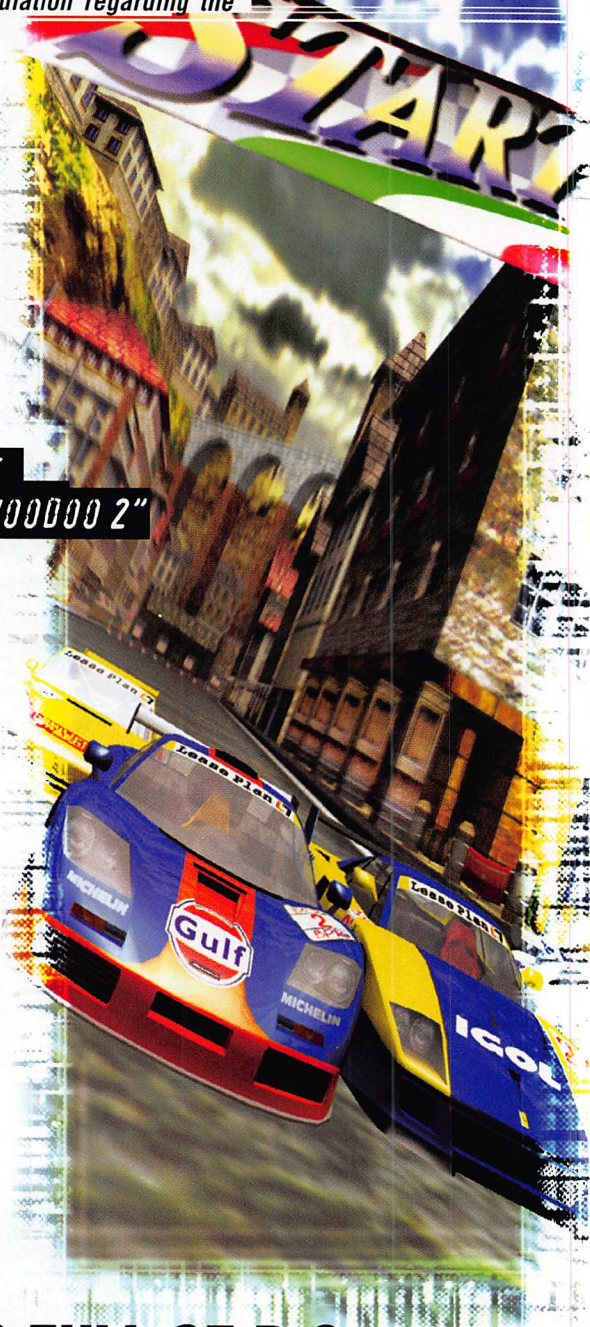
"CAPABLE OF MATCHING OR SURPASSING THE BENCHMARK SET BY VOODOO 2"

We've also stumbled upon the [current] specifications of the *Katana* controller, although these details may change dramatically before the system's release. Apparently Sega is going with a design similar to that of the Saturn analog controller (commonly referred to as the "Nights pad"). This is expected to be shaped similarly (like a *Star Trek* shuttle-craft), and it will have six buttons: four buttons on the front face, and two shoulder 'trigger' buttons. The standard thumb interface should be an analog pad, again very similar to the look and shape of the Saturn analog pad. All very exciting news... but only six buttons?

One final detail, but this one's 100% speculation (from multiple sources, mind you). It has to do with the functions of the *Katana* memory card. Apparently the focus will be on compression. Around 200 blocks of information can be stored on each card, but individual blocks can hold far more than previous console memory cards thanks to an unknown compression technique. Also, the cards will supposedly have small, high-quality LCD displays built-in. Possible uses of the LCD display might be to track and/or catalogue data via menus, or simply to monitor the disposable memory available to individual cards. We've known about this for months, but only recently (as development kits fly into the hands of third-parties) has it been speculated in developers' circles.

SCUD RACE USED AS KATANA TEST

Back when development was only just beginning for the *Katana*, certain third party companies interested in the system (such as Core Design) viewed the fantastic *Scud Race* (right). This was converted in a matter of weeks to demonstrate the power of the console, and reports indicate that the *Katana* version of the racer wasn't only identical to the arcade, but actually performed better in certain areas (car detail was increased, for example). This bodes extremely well for embittered Saturn owners.



SEGA NEWS - S.O.A. IS FULL OF B.S.

After two years as acting C.O.O. (Chief Operating Officer), Bernie Stolar has finally been promoted to both President and C.O.O. of Sega's North American branch, S.O.A..

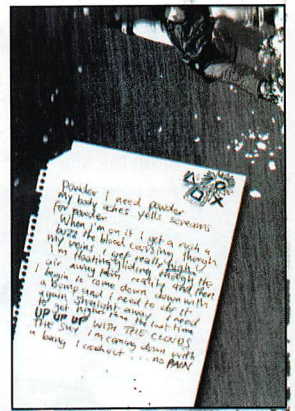
This comes as Shoichiro Irimajiri returns to Japan to assume control of Sega Enterprises, leaving the position open. Stolar will still be reporting to Irimajiri, who will be serving as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Sega of America.

Mr. Stolar's role will be to guide Sega's North American properties into the next millennium, including a successful launch of Sega's "super" console in America in 1999. It has been reported that Stolar is currently in charge of 'putting-down' the Saturn (so to speak) gently, to make way for the new console while still maintaining a positive public image. Whether he can manage to downplay the Saturn's poor U.S. performance, thus preserving the Sega brand name in the console market, is the question at hand. The odds are in his favor, however, as most gamers seem to be more than ready for the next generation of gaming hardware from Sega. We shall see.

SNOW JOKE - ADVERT WITHDRAWN

Video game advertising in the UK is a lot more risqué (take the examples of *Resident Evil* which featured a bath-tub of blood...

...and *Doom* which plastered the words "Go to Hell" in front of a backdrop of cow offal), but Sony seem to have overstepped the mark with their *Coolboarders 2* advertisement, which some easily-offended parties say hints at cocaine abuse. Certain 'enraged groups' remarked that the phrases "powder, I need powder", and "when I'm on it, I get a rush, a buzz" weren't merely about zipping down a mountain strapped to a plank of wood, but also pertained to a love affair with Smack. Sony responded by withdrawing the ad, commenting that "the advert is written in snowboarder parlance and is meant to reflect the adrenaline rush of the sport. This is the language that snowboarders use". We smell bovine excretion; it's also blatantly written from a Cocaine addict's perspective. Perhaps Sony should have added "I've been on it for months. I can't get enough. My nasal cavity's destroyed and all my teeth have fallen out." to the bottom of the advert (after our snowboarding chum had hit a tree, obviously). Now if only U.S. advertising was this controversial...



BLOODY PHWOAR!!

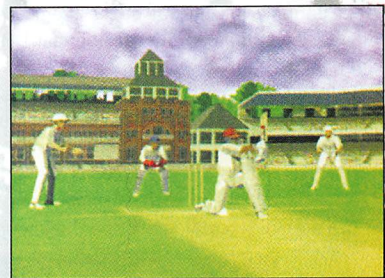
Let's see now... a pug dog with a human head or some woman with her assets on show to advertise the PlayStation equivalent of *Fighting Vipers* meets *Lost Boys*...

...take your pick at the advertising campaigns for *Bloody Roar*. Whatever your preference, the impact these adverts are having in the UK is unprecedented; some magazines are running double page spreads of the young lady and her underwear. The caption goes "This picture is brought to you by *Bloody Roar*. The game that turns men into crazed, slobbering animals". Well, at least we know what the target audience is... those seeking actual pictures of the game should obtain a magnifying glass and locate the five tiny screen shots tucked away in a corner. Other attempts to shock UK gamers into purchasing video games include Virgin's *Command and Conquer* ads; depicting historic dictators with the tag-line "previous high scores". Those crazy Brits...

HOWZAT??!!

Not out... over here. Ever bowled a maiden over and got away with it?

Fielded at Silly Mid-on? Scored a six off a googly? Well, now you'll have a chance to, thanks to *Brian Lara Cricket 98* on the PC and PlayStation, coming to every English home this summer thanks to Codemasters. With atmosphere so tense you can cut it with a spoon, *BLC 98* will feature more than 240 well-known cricketing legends scratching themselves, snoozing at the boundary and producing red stains around their groin area when coming in to bowl (something, we're assured, is to do with a cricketer's balls...). Expect an extremely realistic simulation of this super-intense sport that features six hours of nothing happening, then rain, tea and scones, rain, darkness and men dressed in pajamas. A release date in this country is uncertain to say the least. We'll keep you posted... if anyone cares.



TEKKEN ON ALLCOMERS

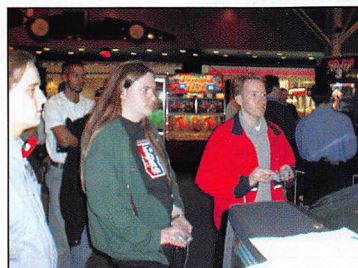
Despite the inclement weather and encroaching deadline, three of the GR crew descended on the Namco WonderPark in San Jose...

...to attend the Press event that not only proved the worth of Editorial staff across the country, but gave video game hacks the first glimpse of *Tekken 3* running on the PlayStation. After a couple of warm-up sessions, a bout or two of real-life Capoeira watching and some top-rated tucker, gaming magazines threw in their best players for



a brawl-fest. Flying the Republic flag was Gary Harrod (Art Director), David Hodgson (Editorial Director) and Greg Rau (Associate Publisher and Eddy Gordo shake-out pro). Once the wheat had been separated from the chaff, Gary's four straight wins landed him in the semi-final... against David (who'd already beaten Greg previously). Harrod slapped Hodgson down in a barrage of fists and feet; and then faced Ryan McDonald (*GameSpot*) and Tyrone Rodriguez (*Tips and Tricks*) for the final... and choked. Still, we managed a commendable third and

fourth, and more importantly, there was excellent sportsmanship and an enjoyable time (but then, we wouldn't be saying that if we'd won, now would we?). We'll be back at E3 with new improved skills, mark our words...



SLAPPIN' DOWN THE SCRUBS...

Gary won an exceedingly large trophy (above). But Ryan's and Tyrone's were bigger. Hodgson teaches EGM's Features Editor 'The Ways of Tekken Righteousness' (right). Before the hack fight, real Capoeira martial artists threw down the superior skills (far right).

SATURN ALIVE AND WELL IN EUROPE

Saturn owners will be interested to know that games are still be released religiously over in Europe, with such titles as *Resident Evil 2*...

...and *X-Men Vs. StreetFighter* definitely getting translations. Interestingly, both the aforementioned titles are to use the 4Mb RAM pack (meaning RE2 should have more enemies on-screen to fight than the PS version), as does the new conversion of *Vampire Savior* also from Capcom (see *World Republic* for further information on this one). In other Sega news, UK developers, The Bitmap Brothers, are to release their tongue-in-cheek C&C-style strategy game *Z*, which has enjoyed great success on the PC.



ET TU, CRAVE?

The splinter group from Square U.S. and the remnants of the recently imploded Lobotomy have teamed up...

...to form Crave; set to provide gamers with unparalleled and shockingly outstanding gambling simulations! Yes, before Crave's *Final Fantasy* killer astounds the gaming press, Crave are set to release *Caesar's Palace* for the Nintendo 64 after buying the rights to a load of Interplay titles. With the stigma attached to gambling, sorry, casino games in the past, Crave are set to change the genre slightly; by making the game actually entertaining to play. Lead Designer (and part-time editor for *Gamers' Republic*) Dan Jevons is heading up the operation, which promises to include the entire *Caesar's Palace* set out in a first-person *Quake*-style engine, a whole load of characters to interact with (including bouncers, gambling sharks, pimps and the like), *Indecent Proposal*-style chat-up lines and even the option to 'score' with a partner of your choosing and take them to your hotel room (all in the best possible taste of course; this is a Nintendo title; you'll be just 'talking' in your room over a nice cup of coffee and you're gambling for chips here, not money). Expect a whole lot more than a casino-sim by Christmas 1998.

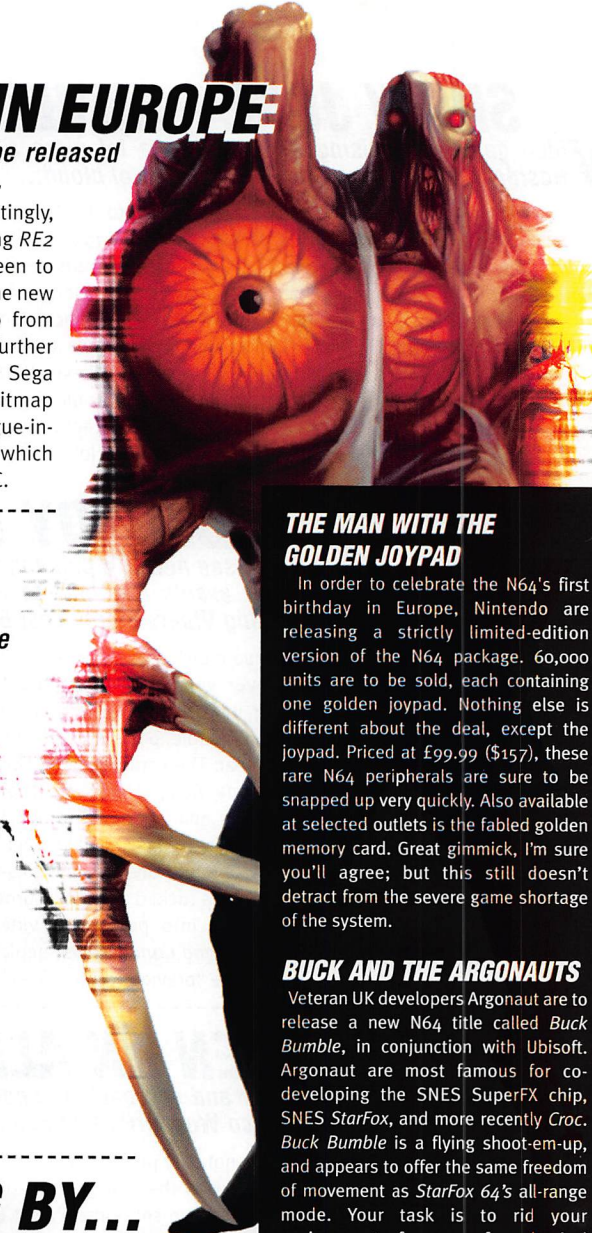
WILD 9s... STANDING BY...

Rumors and speculation have surrounded Shiny's upcoming *Wild 9s* ever since the game was first announced back in 1996...

After jumping in and out of the media spotlight for the past two years (and even having a brief advertising campaign prior to the last E3), *Wild 9s* seems to finally have a solid release date; this September 29th. Even though *Wild 9s* had a few 'minor' production problems early into the development and a near total change of staff, Scott Herlington (*Wild 9s* producer) and David Perry (the man behind Shiny, who is said to actually be buttoning up each level) apparently have this title back on track. *Wild 9s* now features an improved (and even nastier) 'torture' weapon that allows you to throw around enemies and certain other gameplay elements that will bring a smile to *Earthworm Jim* fans. Next month we'll have more in-depth information on *Wild 9s*, including a bit on the upcoming limited edition (and ultra cool) packaging!



Dave Perry, head honcho over at the Shiny Laguna Beach resort is personally overseeing the evolution of the dreaded torture weapon... Make it hurt!!



THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN JOYPAD

In order to celebrate the N64's first birthday in Europe, Nintendo are releasing a strictly limited-edition version of the N64 package. 60,000 units are to be sold, each containing one golden joypad. Nothing else is different about the deal, except the joypad. Priced at £99.99 (\$157), these rare N64 peripherals are sure to be snapped up very quickly. Also available at selected outlets is the fabled golden memory card. Great gimmick, I'm sure you'll agree; but this still doesn't detract from the severe game shortage of the system.

BUCK AND THE ARGONAUTS

Veteran UK developers Argonaut are to release a new N64 title called *Buck Bumble*, in conjunction with Ubisoft. Argonaut are most famous for co-developing the SNES SuperFX chip, SNES *StarFox*, and more recently *Croc*. *Buck Bumble* is a flying shoot-em-up, and appears to offer the same freedom of movement as *StarFox 64*'s all-range mode. Your task is to rid your environment of a race of mechanical alien insects using your bumblebee chum. Stay tuned for more info, as Argonaut are working on more titles as we speak.



RARE HEROES

It would appear that Rare are currently beaver away on eight (yes, eight!) new projects. These include the imminent(ish) *Banjo-Kazooie*, *Conker's Quest*, *Ultra Donkey Kong* and a new game that will use the *Goldeneye* gaming engine (*Live and Let Die 64*, *Miss Money Penny*?). Other details are sketchy at best, but the *Diddy Kong Racing* team are working hard on another secret project.

SODA SHOCKER STUNS NATION... S'UP, PUNK?

"Hey, Heihachi! What's that artificially colored concoction you're holding?" "That's my secret elixir, young whippersnapper; it is known as an Urban Soda..."



This is Sooper Dooper Soda. Made by those great folks over at Jones' Soda Company. Mmmm! This is recommended by my entire Zaibatsu!". For those *Tekken* fans wishing to swallow down Heihachi's Cream Soda, Namco have entered into a mini-partnership of sorts, slapping Iron Fist characters on the front of Jones' Soda's line of soft drinks. We find that Nina loves her Blue Bubble Gum Soda, Jin's rather partial to Orange Soda, and the king of Capoeira takes time out to slurp down some Strawberry Lime beverage between bouts. We've tasted this heady (yet collectable) brew, and found it to taste exactly like normal soda, but with *Tekken* characters on the front of the bottle.

EA AND ATLANTIC TO HEADBANG TOGETHER

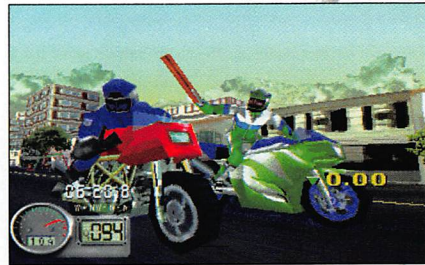
Electronic Arts and Atlantic records have signed an agreement whereby several of Atlantic's top rock acts will lend their tunes to the game soundtrack of *Road Rash 3D*...

Additionally, Atlantic will be releasing a separate companion compilation of all the in-game music (plus bonus tracks), to be available in music stores everywhere this spring.

The alliance should be beneficial to both EA and Atlantic, as each company addresses a very important area of the entertainment industry; Playing video games, and listening to music. Quite a few prolific artists (such as *Sugar Ray*) are set to appear on the *Road Rash 3D* soundtrack, as well as *Big Wreck*, *Kid Rock*, and *The Mermen*. On the in-store version of the soundtrack, there will be breaks between tracks containing audio excerpts from the game, just to spice it up a little and perhaps further the sense of affiliation. Also, the album will be an enhanced CD that you can stick in your PC or MAC to view some game previews,

a bunch of the artist's videos, and various *Road Rash*-related interviews.

The reason for all of this hurrah over the *Road Rash 3D* soundtrack seems to be the nature of the game: Mad, free-for-all speed and violence. With a strong rock soundtrack in the background, players should be feeling mighty pumped as they race through one hundred miles of freeways, crowded streets, and sheer canyons clubbing and kicking other bikers...



CROYDON BEATS

Just before you dig into our *Forsaken* feature, we thought we'd detail a little about the music that accompanies this release...

After our little interview in Croydon, we were introduced to one of the men behind the game's rhythmic beat-explosive soundtrack. Stephen Root, AKA Rootie, and his partner,

Dominic Glynn were commissioned by Probe to create a fresh new cacophony of cadence for those bikers entering the *Forsaken* universe. The guys are known as *The Swarm*, and Rootie is a video game soundtrack veteran, with such musical titles as *Alien Trilogy*, *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Extreme G* and, er, *Fantastic Four* under his belt.

Rootie: "We wanted the soundtrack to be integral to the whole *Forsaken* experience, but also make the music the sort of thing that people would want to listen to even when they're not playing the game". The soundtrack consists of an amalgamation of thunderous beats, experimental techno and Drum 'n' Bass. Rootie informed us of the imminent release of the first single from the album, delightfully entitled *Pure Bitch Power*, and featuring urban rapper bloke, MC Burglar (a microphone controller burglar, eh? Novel...). After hearing the single and most of the album, I can report that people who liked the *Wipeout* compilations are going to love this. Look for the complete review in our music section in a future issue...

KENNY DIES IN SILICON

Acclaim has locked up the video game rights to the irreverent cartoon sensation *South Park*. No word yet on exactly how they'll turn America's favorite toon in to a video game but we're sure Kenny will die at the end of each game. Acclaim will develop *South Park* for the PC, Nintendo 64, and PlayStation.

PIPPIN TO THE POST

According to a Japanese weekly, the industry is to say farewell to the Bandai Pippin console, which was made in conjunction with Apple Computers, after Bandai decided to dissolve their Digital Entertainment group. Originally designed to bring Internet access and multimedia joy to many homes, it seemed that no-one really gave a damn about the system, this being reflected in it's appalling sales, having only sold 42,000 units world-wide. R.I.P.

KILL IN STYLE!

Ascii's new *BioHazard* controller features button configuration...

...especially tailored for (you guessed it) *BioHazard* (or *Resident Evil*) gaming. The impressive (as usual) Japanese packaging holds not only the Raccoon Police Special Issue controller but three bags of herb tea (Peppermint, Rose and Lavender to be exact) as well. The controller's been out in Japan since March but there's still no word on a version for America. Perhaps a US version with Starbucks will make it in time for *RE3*?



PLASTIC FANTASTIC... GO FIGURE

McFarlane Toys have become the essential element to top off programmer's and designer's work-stations industry wide. Todd's amazing '98 collection...

...exemplifies his dedication to quality and innovation as he continues to raise the bar in the action figure market. *Kiss Psycho Circus*, *The X-Files*, *Movie Maniacs*, (Eve from *Species II*, *Freddy Krueger*, and *Jason Vorhees*) *Manga Spawn Series 2*, *Monsters Series 2*, and *Dark Ages Spawn* are all set for release in '98. A *Scream 2* figure is also rumored to be in the pipeline.



DUKE NUKEM

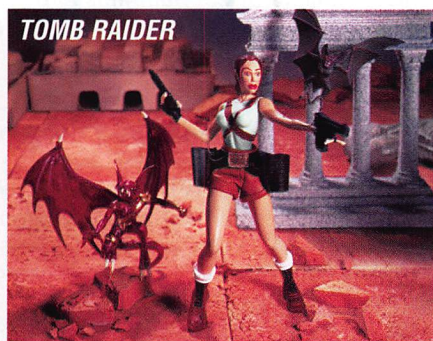
Video game characters are finally beginning to make their way into the growing action figure market, albeit with varying results. Pictured here are *Lara Croft*, *Street Fighter vs. X-Men* and *Resident Evil* (All from Toy Biz), *Final Fantasy 7* (from Bandai) and *Duke Nukem* (from ReSaurus Inc.). Rumor has it that *Lara Croft* will lose the fish lips in an upcoming improved version. Coming soon look for a *Sonic the Hedgehog* line (to coincide with a new animated series) and perhaps *Crash Bandicoot*, if Universal ever gets off their duff. In the mean time, don't be surprised if *Blasto* makes his way to plastic in the near future as well. We have it on good authority that several toy makers are interested...



FF VII (and others)



RESIDENT EVIL



TOMB RAIDER



X-MEN VS. STREET FIGHTER

PSYGNOSIS UNVEILED

Back in late March, Psygnosis held private meetings to show key members of the press their latest wares for the...

...coming season. Their broad-based product line-up included titles covering all genres; racing, strategy, adventure, simulation, sport, platform and shoot-'em-up. After meeting and testing out the games, one factor was quite evident, Psygnosis is continuing its commitment to top-quality game design and development. Using the latest in 3D, multi-player and audio technology, 1998 is going to be a banner year for Psygnosis.

One game that drew a lot of attention was *Global Domination*. Part strategy, part war game and part arcade combat, *Global Domination* puts players in the driver's seat to conquer the world. The developers like to think of it as a cross between *Risk* and *Missile Command*. Players can take on the computer or verse up to 15 other power-hungry opponents over a network. The gameplay is fast and intense. This is a totally unique type of game that will appeal to strategy purists as well as twitch gamers. Look for it this November.

Another unique title was *O.D.T.* (working title). Part shooter, part adventure, *O.D.T.* puts players in an immersive 3D world filled with bizarre enemies and intricate puzzles. The game is played from a third-person perspective and the player can choose between four different characters. Each character has their own special abilities; weapon control, magic ability, physical strength, etc. The game feels like a *Tomb Raider* with some RPG elements incorporated into it. If it seems like an unusual mix, it is, but more importantly, it works really well. It will be released for both Playstation and PC-CD ROM in October. Finally, the classic *Sentinel* (pictured above) makes a much-needed return. Although this may look frighteningly basic graphically, the gameplay (constantly struggling to reach higher ground and evade the Sentinel) is second-to-none.



CHIPS ARE DOWN!

It is common knowledge in the gaming community that the 3D architecture of Sega's new console is being provided by NEC hardware...

This should be some variation of the Power VR2 board, or its proposed higher-end brethren, the *Highlander* board. Further proof of this marriage between NEC and Sega can be witnessed on the arcade front.

NEC has developed the newest 3D arcade chipset for use in Sega products, and it is set to replace *Model 3* in the near future. The *Naomi* board is a powerhouse built upon multiple 3D cores that can be produced at almost half the cost of *Model 3*. Individual boards within the 3D core are similar to the *Katana* 3D chipset, but when stacked together, the combined core is said to be capable of displaying polygons in the 10 to 12 million range (invariably surpassing the home hardware). The *Model 3* board is a marvel of technology with plenty of incredible games that exploit the hardware, but it is also a difficult choice for U.S. arcade owners due to the steep price of the boards. When Sega institutes the *Naomi* hardware into their arcade program, the cost of providing boards and machine set-ups to arcade owners suddenly becomes affordable and attractive. Cheaper, in fact (even considering the board's massive powerplant), than Namco's System 11 and 22 hardware. This creates an interesting scenario for Sega's arcade division in 1999, as they will be able to achieve a comfortable level of market saturation for the first time in years. Also, the relatively low price and easy accessibility will give third-parties plenty of opportunities to license the hardware for the creation of their own original titles.

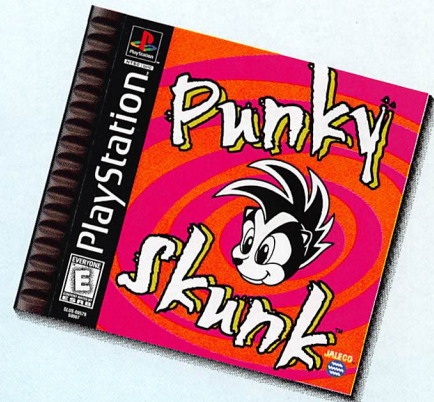
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now at a price you'll love to pay.**



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INITIALIZING TRANSMISSION...

PEOPLE LOVE CHARTS. THEY WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEIR COMRADES-IN-ARMS ARE PURCHASING IN TERMS OF VIDEO GAMES SALES (AND SOMETIMES WHY THEY'RE PURCHASING A CERTAIN GAME). FRESH FROM COMPUTER GAMING STORES FROM ACROSS THE U.S., WE'VE GATHERED COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION FOR VIDEO GAMES SALES FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL. IN AMERICA, THERE'S ONLY TWO CONSOLE GIANTS IN THE RUNNING: SONY AND NINTENDO. THE SHEER NUMBER OF QUALITY TITLES SONY HAS RIGHT NOW MEANS ALL NINTENDO'S DRIZZLE OF GAMES SELL VERY WELL...

ON A GLOBAL SCALE

HOWEVER, IN A FEW KEY PLACES ACROSS THE GLOBE, THE SITUATION IS RATHER DIFFERENT. IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ACROSS EUROPE, SONY HAS A STRANGLE-HOLD THAT'S HARD TO WRESTLE OUT OF; HENCE NINTENDO'S MISERABLE SHOWING (THE DRIZZLE OF N64 TITLES OVER THERE IS MORE OF A DROUGHT). THE CUNNING PLAN TO RE-RELEASE OLDER TITLES AT CHEAPER PRICES WAS ALSO AN EXTREMELY BRIGHT MOVE FOR SONY. OUR CHART HOWEVER, REFLECTS OUR ALMOST CONSTANT ADDICTION TO MULTI-PLAYER GAMING... WHERE THE PC REIGNS SUPREME.

the american

- 01) YOSHI'S STORY N64
- 02) TRIPLE PLAY '99 PSX
- 03) NBA SHOOTOUT '98 PSX
- 04) RESIDENT EVIL 2 PSX
- 05) GOLDENEYE N64
- 06) BLOODY ROAR PSX
- 07) FINAL FANTASY TACTICS PSX
- 08) WCW NITRO PSX
- 09) SNOWBOARD KIDS N64
- 10) GEX: ENTER THE GECKO PSX

the european

- 01) QUAKE 2 PC
- 02) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 03) G DARIUS PSX (IMPORT)
- 04) PANZER DRAGON SAGA SS
- 05) STARGRAFT PC
- 06) GRAN TURISMO PSX
- 07) VAMPIRE SAVIOR SS (IMPORT)
- 08) VIGILANTE 8 PSX
- 09) SANITARIUM PC
- 10) FORSAKEN PC

the japanese

- 01) SATURA WAR 2 SS
- 02) PARASITE EVE PSX
- 03) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 04) DRAGON FORCE 2 SS
- 05) GRAN TURISMO PSX
- 06) WAKU WAKU PUVO PUVO DUNGEON SS
- 07) NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING 3 PSX
- 08) POWERFUL PRO BASEBALL 5 N64
- 09) HOUSE OF THE DEAD SS
- 10) REBUS PSX

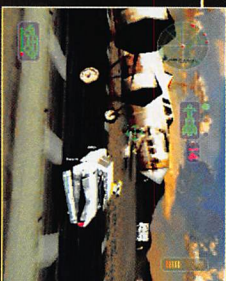
the european

- 01) DIE HARD TRILOGY PLATINUM PSX
- 02) WIPEOUT 2097 PLATINUM PSX
- 03) MICRO MACHINES V3 PLATINUM PSX
- 04) GOLDENEYE N64
- 05) FIFA 98: ROAD TO WORLD CUP PSX
- 06) MYSTERIES OF SITH: JEDI KNIGHT PC CD
- 07) DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 PLATINUM PSX
- 08) GRAND THEFT AUTO PSX
- 09) COOL BOARDERS 2 PSX
- 10) BUSHIDO BLADE PSX

EDITORS' TOP TEN

halverson

- 01) BLASTO PSX
- 02) MYSTICAL NINJA N64
- 03) PANZER DRAGON SAGA SS
- 04) G DARIUS PSX (IMPORT)
- 05) SUBCULTURE PC
- 06) MEAT PUPPET PC
- 07) QUAKE 2 PC
- 08) DARK EARTH PC
- 09) 1080° SNOWBOARDING N64
- 10) TOMBA PSX



hodgepodge

- 01) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 02) GRAN TURISMO PSX
- 03) SANITARIUM PC
- 04) STARGRAFT PC
- 05) QUAKE 2 PC
- 06) VIGILANTE 8 PSX
- 07) TENCHU PSX
- 08) 1080° SNOWBOARDING N64
- 09) FORSAKEN PC
- 10) COMMAND & CONQUER PC

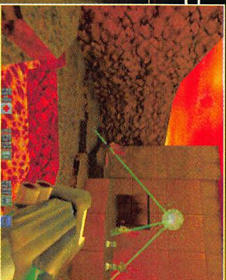
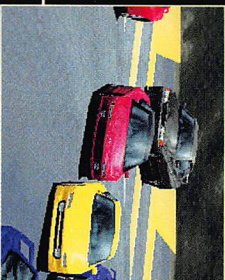
rees

- 01) QUAKE 2 PC
- 02) FORSAKEN PC
- 03) STARGRAFT PC
- 04) G DARIUS PSX (IMPORT)
- 05) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 06) HEXEN 2: MISSION PACK PC
- 07) MYTH MAC/PC
- 08) PANZER DRAGON SAGA SS
- 09) SANITARIUM PC
- 10) COMMAND & CONQUER PC



hobbs

- 01) GRAN TURISMO PSX
- 02) VAMPIRE SAVIOR SS (IMPORT)
- 03) EINHANDER PSX
- 04) G DARIUS PSX (IMPORT)
- 05) 1080° SNOWBOARDING N64
- 06) QUAKE 2 PC
- 07) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 08) PANZER DRAGON SAGA SS
- 09) DEAD OR ALIVE PSX
- 10) YOSHI'S STORY N64



lochlanart

- 01) QUAKE 2 PC
- 02) STARGRAFT PC
- 03) VAMPIRE SAVIOR SS (IMPORT)
- 04) BURNING RANGERS SS
- 05) COMMAND AND CONQUER PC
- 06) TEKKEN 3 PSX
- 07) XENGEARS PSX (IMPORT)
- 08) SANITARIUM PC
- 09) PANZER DRAGON SAGA SS
- 10) PARASITE EVE PSX (IMPORT)

TRANSMISSION RECEIVED.

4/16/97

of the month

TECH FRONT

Every time a new technology appears on the horizon, be it a new console, a new PC graphics accelerator, or just a new game that happens to push the envelope of what has been done

before, a bewildering new array of technojargon comes with it,

often with little to no explanation of what it all actually means to you, the end user.

We hope this may be remedied, at least in part, by the following brief discussion of some of

rendering techniques currently in use and how they actually affect what you see on the screen.

1. TELL ME ABOUT SHADING

The common element to the graphics of nearly all 3-D games currently on the market is that they break everything in the world down into polygons, usually triangles, and then decide how these triangles should appear on the screen. Whether the shading will be the final color of the triangle, or whether it will be used as a lighting effect, it is an important part of the final result. I discuss three different shading methods: flat shading, Gouraud shading, and Phong shading. With flat shading, each triangle has a single color, which produces a flat, blocky result, and also tends to draw attention to the edges of triangles. The earliest flight simulators and other 3-D games like *Virtua Racing* and the first *Virtua Fighter* used only flat shading. Gouraud shading gives a color to each point of a triangle, and then linearly averages those three colors over the triangle. This has the advantage that it can make a triangle appear to be part of a curved surface. For those who remember being impressed by the landscape of *Cybermorph*, the first game for the ill-fated Atari Jaguar, the curved appearance was due to liberal use of Gouraud shading. Finally, Phong shading, used only for lighting effects, actually simulates a light hitting a curved

surface, and even then they won't look as sharp). However, calculating a light color at each pixel is very computational, so no game currently on the market actually incorporates Phong shading.

2. TEXTURE MAPPING FOR BEGINNERS

Regardless of the choice of shading method, one can choose whether or not to texture map. Put simply, without texture mapping the computer is drawing a colored triangle hanging in space, while with texture mapping the triangle can have a picture, called the 'texture', painted on it. The ideal situation for texture mapping would be something like a picture gallery, with lots of flat surfaces having very detailed patterns. Shading is then important only if one wants to use lighting effects; if so, the triangle is shaded with a light color, and the color of the light everywhere on the triangle is then combined with the color of the texture to give the final result. Even with texture mapping, the choice of shading method can be important: In the arcade version of *Virtua Fighter 2*, the lighting was flat shaded, so that even though the lighting made the characters look more 3D, the flat shading also made the edges more visible, and the characters appeared blockier (this is why some people preferred the Saturn version, which had no lighting at all).

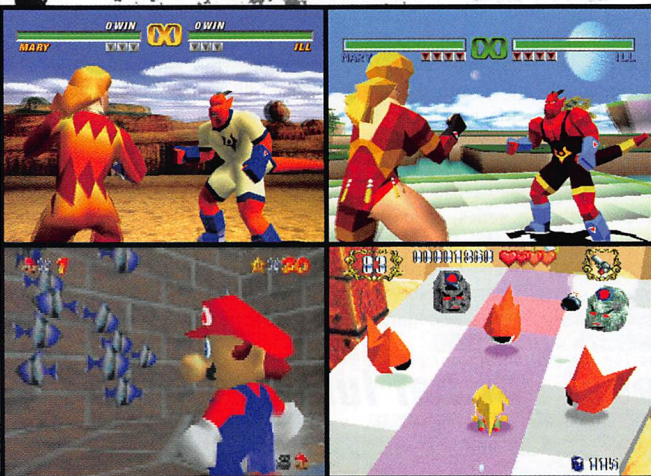
BEHIND THE GRAPHICAL SPECS: WHAT DOES TRILINEAR FILTERED PHONG SHADED LIGHT SOURCED TEXTURE MAPPING MEAN TO ME?

surface, and has the primary advantage that unlike Gouraud shaded lighting, it always catches highlights (since Gouraud shading only calculates a new color at each point of the triangle, at best it will only catch highlights

3. SMOOTHING OUT THE ROUGH EDGES

Texture mapping still suffers the usual limitations of computers; the textures and the screen cannot have arbitrary detail, but rather are made up of a limited number of pixels (usually called 'texels' for the texture), so things don't appear as smooth as one would like. This sort of problem in general is known as aliasing. An example with which we are all familiar is pixellation, when you get too close to a triangle, and it becomes clear that the texture on it is only made up of a number of squares, rather than a smooth picture. Bilinear filtering addresses this problem by blurring the texel boundaries so that the different squares in the texture don't stand out as much (although the process is computational enough that it is never done in software, so textures also behave poorly when far away, appearing to glitter or shimmer, and sometimes suffering from the 'Moir' effect where non-existent patterns seem to appear. Mip-mapping helps with this by storing the texture for each triangle at different resolutions (called 'mip-maps'), using lower resolution mip-maps when a triangle is further away. Mip-mapping has the disadvantage that switching from higher to lower resolution mip-maps often produces a visible jump (known as mip-map pop-in). One can combine bilinear filtering and mip-mapping, and can even get rid of mip-map pop-in by linearly averaging the two 'closest' mip-maps so that there is never a jump from one mip-map to another. This combined averaging process is what is called (wait for it) trilinear filtering.

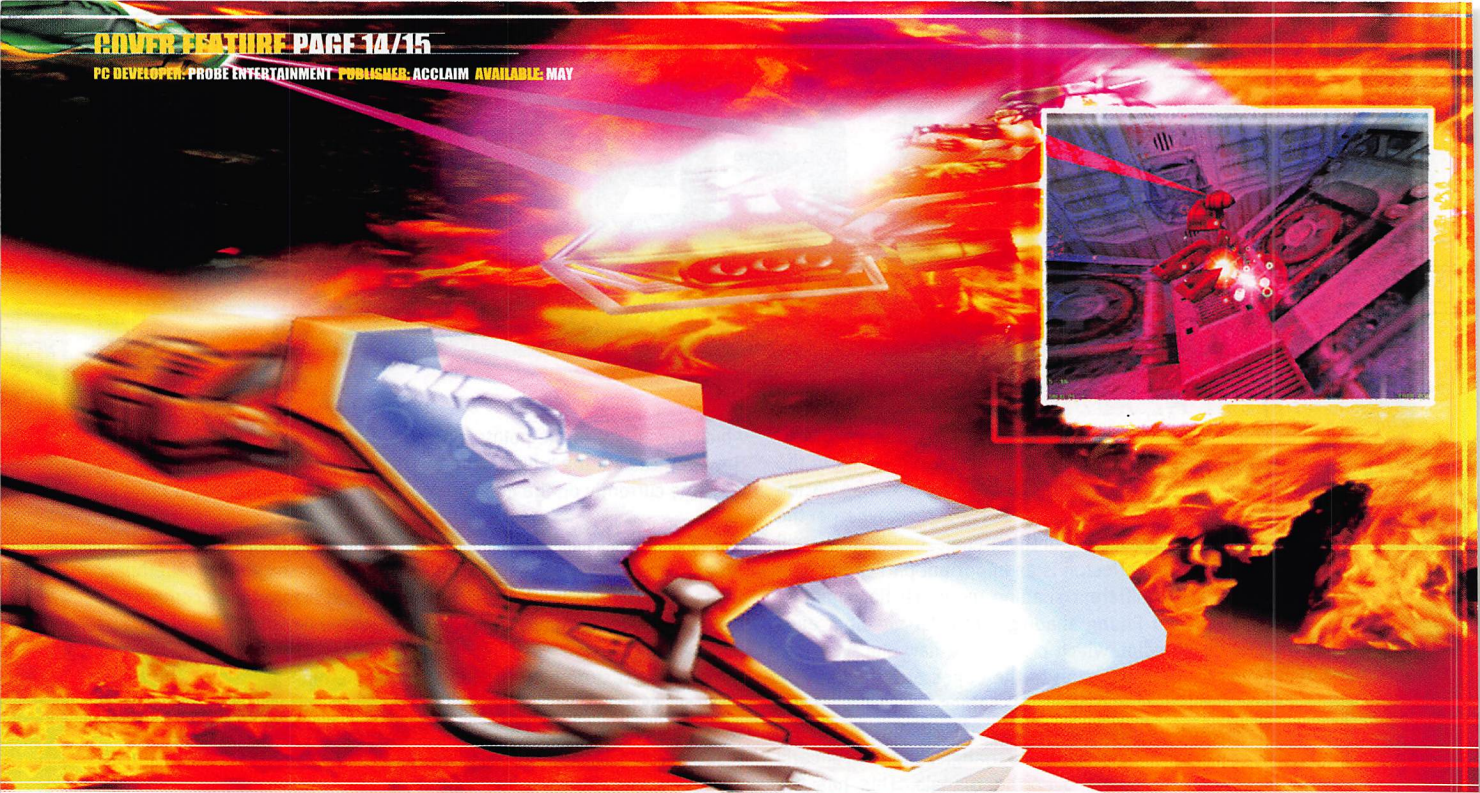
Of course, there are other important rendering techniques, including environment mapping, transparencies, and reflections, and there are always new ones around the corner, but these will have to wait for future months and less introductory columns.



Squaresoft's *Tobal 2* (top left) used gouraud shading and lighting very effectively. The characters aren't constructed of a huge number of polygons, but when gouraud shading is applied it gives the appearance of smooth edges. Compare the effect to *Tobal no. 1*, which was primarily flat-shaded (top right). *Mario 64* (bottom left) uses bilinear filtering throughout the game to smooth-out textures which would normally suffer from pixellation. Some games, such as *Floating Runner* (bottom right), employed a mixture of flat-shaded and textured polygons.

MADE UP OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF PIXELS, SO THINGS DON'T APPEAR AS SMOOTH AS ONE WOULD LIKE.
THIS SORT OF PROBLEM IS KNOWN AS ALIASING

Brian Osserman is a third year student at Harvard University studying mathematics and computer science. and has been playing video games and programming for as long as he can remember, starting with Logo on an Atari 800 in 1st grade.



Setting new standards in graphical appeal, *Forsaken* prepares to launch...

Just a couple of years ago, 3D graphics engines seemed to be decades away from matching the splendor of real-time SGI environments, but with the advent of 3dfx technology (and the subsequent onslaught of games that support it) the gap is slowly but surely closing. Probe's upcoming visually stunning title, *Forsaken*, is a testament to this continuing evolution. In terms of pure graphical appeal, it is probably one the most affecting games to date, even surpassing the mighty *Quake II* in some respects. This first *Gamers' Republic* cover story not only propels Probe's multi-platform champion into the American public eye, but also includes an interview with Tony Beckwith, the producer of the game.

Forsaken's plot depicts a grim future in which the Earth, after suffering a catastrophic accidental fusion reaction, has been dislodged from its axis. This tragedy caused the planet's atmosphere to quickly dissipate, and shortly thereafter the entire human race was abolished; leaving the Earth a sitting duck for alien bounty hunters, pitiless mercenaries, and any other scavenging scum that feel so inclined to rape the planet of its remaining wealth. You

play as one of these rogue dregs of the universe traveling in what is called a "pioncycle" (a hybrid motorcycle/hovercraft), and soon discover that the place is buzzing with robotic defenses placed by the Imperial Theocracy (think intergalactic

United Nations) to keep infiltrators at bay; not to mention a few other outcasts like yourself.

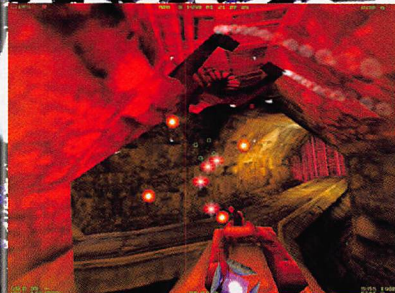
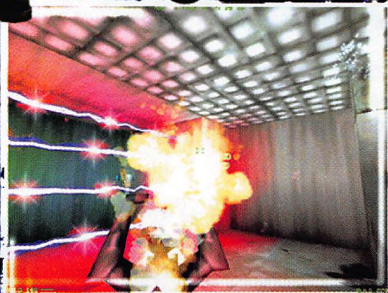
The concept behind *Forsaken* wasn't exactly pioneered by Probe. In fact, some say it has a bit too much in common with Interplay's *Descent* and *Descent II* titles (apparently without coincidence, as one of Probe's goals was to create a "*Descent*-beater"). Players navigate their contraption through relatively confined 3D environments, feel the same stomach-wrenching freedom of movement, pick up alternate weapons and power-ups, hit switches, solve puzzles and battle legions of sentinel robots... Not exactly revolutionary, but where *Forsaken* is a sure improvement over the perennial *Descent* series is in the graphical department.

Straight up, the sort of optical lunacy that *Forsaken* afflicts on its players is almost illegal. Saturated with dazzling luminescent effects, rendered with high-quality textures, and boasting a frame-rate that has trouble dipping below the 90-fps mark (with Voodoo2 that is), *Forsaken* never ceases to amaze. Gamers who are suckers for silky frame-rates and excellent light-sourcing will surely melt when they first witness this game in motion. The surroundings are lit with delicate ambience, glistening sparks sputter and bounce off of surfaces, electric bolts bathe their surroundings in color, and when things heat up (and they often do) the screen is showered with volatile brilliance. Even the liquids ripple with perfect affection when hit. The whole experience can be likened to flying through an early scene from the popular *The Mind's Eye* series; it looks that good. But this isn't a pre-recorded sequence; it's a real-time 3D engine.

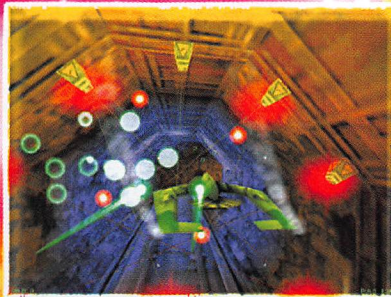
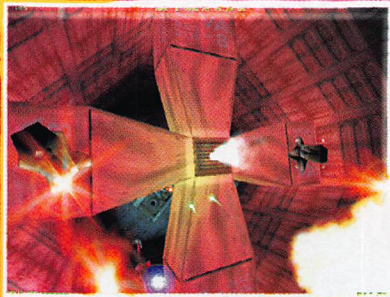
Forsaken's weapon collection does much to depart from what we have already seen as well. Your pioncycle comes fully equipped with a dual weapon system (a primary and secondary trigger) that can be impressively upgraded as

Smooth is not the word to describe the motion of your craft...

this is almost illegal optical lunacy



Single player *Forsaken* is enthralling, but the real challenge (and fun) lies in the multi-player carnage that *Deathmatch* offers



THE FUTURE IS FORSAKEN

By Dave Rees

you find new arms and power-ups. And of course, when fired, each weapon projectile has an accompanying flare effect that illuminates nearby surfaces. Some of the more powerful weapons like the Trojax, Pyrolite Rifle, Transpulse, Beam Laser, and the awesome Titan (a very destructive smart bomb of sorts) are all spectacular to watch. When you lose a life, your weapons are "dropped off" at the place of your death for you to reclaim; great for single-player play, but not multi-player since the one responsible for your death will surely scoop up the goods before you have a chance to reach it.

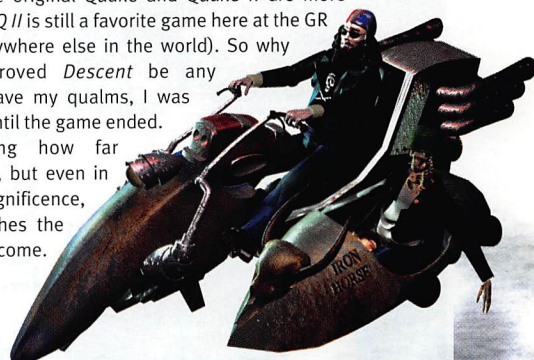
So what about network play? The PC version of Forsaken will be loaded with multi-player options (check the following two pages for PSX and N64 options) including support for IPX, TCP/IP, serial and modem play. Each "Deathmatch" can have up to 16 simultaneous players, and can have one of many types including Free for All, Team Play, CTF, and the all-new Bounty Hunt where players race to see who can find and hold on to a gold bar the longest.

Forsaken does have some early woes however. Despite this captivating beauty, playing *Forsaken* as a single-player game becomes a little monotonous primarily due to minimal enemy variations. Additionally, the levels, as fun and clever as they are, are somewhat enigmatic; the character dimensions aren't proportional to the textures, which gives you a skewed perspective of the world (then again, your birthplace is on some other planet, so technically that

one can slide). Of higher impact, however, is the fact that much of the level architecture has no logic to it. While playing, I found myself questioning why certain rooms were in certain places, and wondering how a 'human' would have traveled between rooms that I can only access via a twisted, narrow air duct. But then again, will it matter?

Maybe not. That old cliché that discusses things that "ain't broke" has proven to be true in the gaming industry, at least for some titles. The differences between the original *Quake* and *Quake II* are more technical in nature, and *Q II* is still a favorite game here at the GR offices (as well as everywhere else in the world). So why would a greatly improved *Descent* be any different? Although I have my qualms, I was continually in a trance until the game ended.

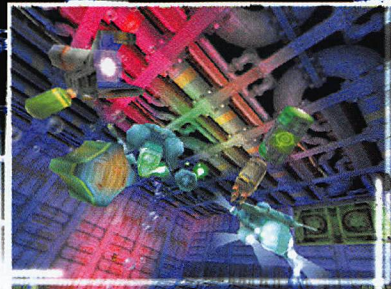
There is no telling how far technology will take us, but even in its state of visual magnificence, *Forsaken* merely scratches the surface of what is to come. Imagine that.



A visual explosion of graphical effects

Eye-popping visuals and stomach-churning levels combine to produce a trance-like sensation to your play!

PC Gamers who crave *Forsaken*'s graphical brilliance will need a 3D accelerator (preferably a Voodoo2), but if you don't have one, you're not completely out of luck. I won't deny that I had an ideal setup to play *Forsaken* (a Pentium 2 processor running at 300 MHz, loads of RAM, and a Voodoo2 board to boot), but the game's engine is still powerful enough to impress even the harshest critic when it is running in software. Additionally, there is a capacious number of options that allow you to adjust the detail levels allowing for smooth frame-rates on lower-end machines. If you are interested in checking it out, you can download the 14 Mb demo (or buy it) from www.acclaim.net.



More Forsaken on the next page...



PlayStation owners are in for a real treat this month as the PSX version of Probe's blast-a-thon is heading to stores exceptionally shortly. The copy we have been playing is much more impressive than we expected and is our current favorite of the two console versions. The PSX may have a wimpy two MB of RAM, but somehow Probe were able to squish in just about every detail.

As one might expect, much of the texture detail has been lost and the lighting is not as

vibrant, but the levels are structured identically to the PC game (unlike the N64 version) and the environments are still incredibly crisp. Surprisingly, the frame rate stays close to a remarkable 60-fps mark, which also makes the game much easier to enjoy. To reduce the polygon count, it appears that some of the models have been simplified and doors removed, but not in an encumbering or impeding way.

Where playing *Forsaken* on the PSX differs

most from the PC is in the control. The game works best with the analog controller and will accept many different configurations, but no matter how you slice it, maneuvering your bike with your PSX controller is not nearly as tight as using a mouse. Additionally, the movement of your bike is stiff and continually hampered. Regardless, getting used to the controls may take some practice, but with time you'll be an ace pilot.

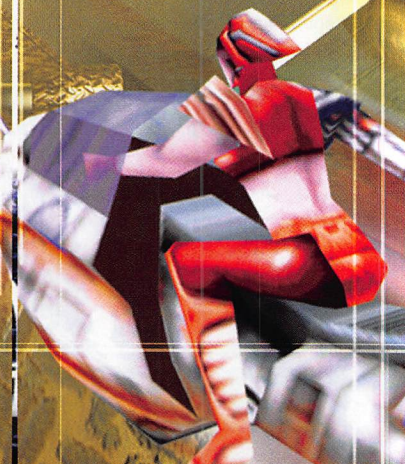
The characters have all made the

translation but it seems that much of the speech is missing (darn...). The PlayStation version will also be host to a split-screen Deathmatch mode where two players can square off against each other. All of the same rules apply here, you'll just have a measly half-screen to work with.

As I stated, the PSX version of *Forsaken* looks to be an excellent translation; if you're a PlayStation owner looking for a greatly improved version of *Descent*, look no further.



FORSAKEN ON THE SONY PLAYSTATION
Surprisingly adept port-over for PlayStation owners, *Forsaken* PlayStation looks to be a chunkier copy of the PC original.





Destined to be one of the flashier N64 titles in some time, *Forsaken 64*, developed by the talented folks at Iguana UK, surprisingly contains completely new levels and enemies over the PC and PSX versions. This intentional alteration was due to Acclaim wishing a separate variant of *Forsaken* to be picked up by fans of the original.

Not very many titles on Nintendo's starving box exploit the lighting capabilities of the machine in any aggressive manner

(especially third party). As you may have gathered by now, *Forsaken* will. In general, the environments are much darker and more confined which makes the dynamic lighting effects more dramatic, but it also bottlenecks the gameplay at times.

Perhaps as a tribute to *StarFox 64*, another exclusive feature added to the N64 version will allow for multiple routes; the path you take will be determined by how well you do. If you perform well on certain stages, you'll

advance to tougher levels and travel a different route.

Forsaken 64 controls very well with Nintendo's analog controller. The buttons can be setup to act precisely as they did in *Turok* so anyone who enjoyed Iguana's epic dino-thrasher will feel right at home here (despite the hugely different graphics and gameplay on display!).

However, *Forsaken 64*'s trump card will likely be the four-player split-screen mode

that Acclaim states will not drop any frames over the one-player whatsoever... and that's something. This feature is a strong selling point over the PlayStation's 2-player split-screen option. One major problem lurks, as the passageways are so tight and the quarter-screen windows are so small that it is sometimes very hard to see what's going on.

Despite this, Nintendo fans will surely commend Iguana for such an effort.

Similar gameplay mechanics, but a wildly different level layout to hopefully enjoy in tandem with the PC release

FORSAKEN ON THE NINTENDO 64



How long was Forsaken in development?

Two years.

Did you set out to create a Descent beater?

Err, by admission, yes, we did play *Descent*, but we were also playing games like *Quake*, so not just a *Descent* beater but a first-person shooter beater. Some of the press that we've been getting, is like, "it's a *Quake* killer!", and I much prefer that line!

Well, that's because Quake is a much bigger game. So what was your criteria for creating the game?

At the time, Acclaim had a comic division, *Turok* was starting up, and that was their mega-game based on Acclaim Comics characters. We wanted to do a game that could be turned into a comic, [and we] really we decided

we wanted characters in the game. We'd ported *Mortal Kombat* here [in Europe] and you can see the phenomenal success of that, with the comics, the TV show, so we really wanted to make sure that we had strong characterizations. I think we took influences from some of the other games, we played *Duke Nukem* a lot, I just love the voices in *Duke Nukem*, and we felt that if anything, *Duke* added so much to the *Doom* engine; and I think that we've tried for that extra detail in *Forsaken*.

What is your opinion of multi-player games, both on-line and on the consoles?

Stonking! Stonking great fun! [Republic note: The term "stonking" is an English colloquialism used to describe excitement] I mean, *Red Alert* was a big one, but I have to

admit that *Quake 2* didn't have much of a look in here. We still play *Quake* a lot, and if I'm honest, there are people here who still play *Descent* 1...

Really? Okay, how many staff were there on the teams for the PC, PlayStation and N64 versions of Forsaken?

Yeah, I think there's about 10 people over there [at Iguana UK, responsible for the Nintendo 64 version of *Forsaken*]. For our version there were about 25 to 30 people.

Why was the decision made to completely change the N64 version of the game?

Because N64 cartridges cost so much, especially last year, because when Iguana UK started, *Turok* had just come out and cost about £70 [\$110] and yet the PC version cost £30 [£47]. We were like, "if you've got an N64 and a PC then

you can buy the PC for 30 quid, then why would you want to buy the N64 version?" So we thought that if people played the PC version and enjoyed it, then they might want to buy the N64 version and play that because it's different.

What problems did you run into when you were converting the game to run on PlayStation and N64? What sacrifices had to be made?

Oooh... errrr... do you want me to get technical on this?

Yeah, that's fine. Like memory limitations and those sorts of problems.

Yeah, memory and optimization. Running speeds were an absolute nightmare on the PlayStation, trying to keep up with the PC runs were impossible. Z-Buffering was the

biggest problem on the PlayStation, as you've got no depth-sourcing of your polygons. With some of the more intricate 3D objects, we had to build different objects for the PlayStation to put in place, whereas on a PC if you have a sliding door, it works fine on a PC because of the depth-sourcing, but on the PlayStation, it really falls apart. So we had to build a different door, one that was "PlayStation friendly". On the PlayStation, you'll notice that a lot of the doors have beveled edges, and that's the way to sort the problem, because if it was just square, you'd have popping problems between the polygon door and the frame for the door. There was a lot of re-modeling and a lot of trial and error involved.

How much memory were you working with for the



PlayStation and the N64 compared with the PC?

On the PlayStation you have got two megs, and on the PC, umpteen megs. So a lot of PlayStation code had to be written in assembler to make it faster, with lots of huge optimization. The N64 version was done by the other team.

Where do you come up with the names and guises for all the characters and computers? We know that Brenda is one of them [she works at Probe with Tony].

We had a storyboard department here, we said we wanted 16 characters, and they just came up with loads of drawings and sketches, and we looked at them and said "not like that" or "like that" until we had honed it down to 16 bikers. At the end of the day, 16 was a lot and maybe we

should have really only gone for eight. It just gave us a hell of a lot more work to do, but more choice is better.

Absolutely. Now, what was the main concept behind the game?

The mission statement for the game was really to do a first-person shooter with flying, to make a good one player game, and if anything, to do to *Descent*, what *Duke* did to *Doom*. But with a *Quake*-style graphics engine. And also to make sure that there was a strong characterization like in *Duke Nukem*, so that if people want to make toys and stuff its all there. Like I said, we learned from the *Mortal Kombat* experience. Try and make it commercial.

Okay... so why then did you use scantily-clad models to advertise the game?

That came from New York. That was nothing to do with us. Oh really?

Yeah, that's NY marketing. They're not using that marketing campaign in Europe. Hmmm. Why did New York do that? They wanted their packaging to stand out on shelves, they didn't want to look like a million other products, and that's a way of bringing it to people's attention. Once you have the box in the consumers hands, that's half the battle. They turn round and then they see game screen shots and see what the game's all about.

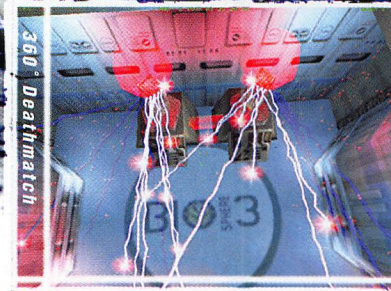
Were there any game features you couldn't implement due to time/memory/taste restraints?

Yeah, a map feature, that was really the main feature, I think that we needed. But I do think that we didn't need a

map feature as much as other games because of the auto-leveling, and because... well, when I'm playing *Quake*, I find myself in a brown room, then another brown room, and then another one, and when I play *Descent*, I'm in a gray room, and then another gray room, etc. and you get lost, yeah? With *Forsaken*, you're in a blue area, then a green area, y'know? It's like *Duke Nukem*. In *Duke Nukem*, you can't get lost, because you remember; "oh this is the bit with the stairs".

Could you tell us a little more about the 3D engine? How many polygons is it throwing around on screen, say, on the PC version?

To tell you the truth, I don't know about our polygon budget, but I know about the bikes. When you see an



enemy biker in the game, single or multi-player, there are six detail levels. So as they get further into the distance, there are less and less polygons. I think the lowest polygon detail level is about 50 and the highest goes up to about 400 to 500.

Was Forsaken based on the Descent engine, or was it totally new?

Nah, it wasn't based on the *Descent* engine. That's based on cubes. If you look at *Descent*'s worlds, they are deformed cubes. Each room is just a cube with its corners pulled out, but it's still a cube engine at the end of the day. Now the *Forsaken* engine is completely free geometry. The modellers can build anything they want; it is up to them. I believe that was our biggest technical hitch in the entire

project, because we set that goal for ourselves and we didn't want to limit our modellers. This made writing the collision system really difficult, but we cracked it the end. We've got a good system that allows us free geometry.

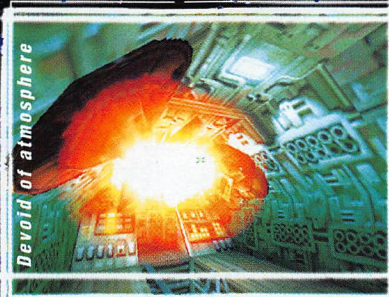
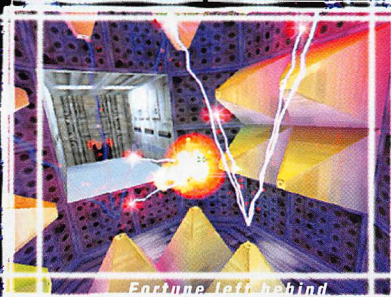
How long did the levels take to design and implement?

They take a hell of a long time. A lot longer than a *Quake* level. The reasons being because of free geometry, you can build anything you want, and this make things very intricate. With the texturing, you can see the richness of it because it isn't slapping gray, gray, gray textures from room to room. Each room takes a lot of thought. Then there are the 3D models; the guys can build anything they want. They've got a level in which you push a switch and like a little droid-thing, like a fork-lift truck, goes off and



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE CREATOR OF FORSAKEN
Factual information about the game that includes important technical data along with other pertinent information...
Gamers' Republic invade the sleepy town of Gwynedd in England...

TONY BECKWITH OF PROBE ENTERTAINMENT
An epic, free-roaming adventure two years in the making, Forsaken was a labor of love for a 30-man crew...



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE CREATOR OF FORSAKEN



picks up crates and reveals a new path to take to get further into the level, and that animation is nothing to do with the programmers. There's another level that has a panel, it just looks like a normal panel with gas coming out of it, and as you shoot it, it goes down a little bit and we have added a morphing system in here. So basically it looks like the panel is buckling and you hear creaking of the super-structure and then it explodes.

Was this designed as a single or multi-player game?

First it was going to be a multi-player, and secondly a single player. But the goal right from the start was not to do a multi-player only game. I can say that there are games out there that play really well multi-player and crap as a single player. Now that's an accusation that I've heard

do it ourselves, because of our next game. But as I said, we are talking to different people, and then it would be more than six months before these add-ons come out.

Tell us more about the astonishing lighting effects, and was the game created with 3dfx and other 3D accelerators in mind?

Yeah, when the game was first devised, 3D accelerators were really in their infancy, and the spec was to write a game that was primarily designed for 3D accelerators, but they weren't even available at the time, so we had to a lot of theoretical code. As in write the code and it will work when the hardware is available. So we were kind of writing ahead of ourselves there!

Are there any add-on expansion packs in the pipe-line?

levelled at *Quake*. Not meaning to be dodgy here [laughs], but even people here think that. *Quake 2* seems to have fixed the problem, because it plays really well in both modes. So, yeah, our goal was to spend the first year doing multi-player and the second year doing single player.

What then, are your opinions of *Descent*?

Excellent multi-player game. Crap single player game.

Has work begun on a sequel to *Forsaken*?

Errr. No. No sequel.

Just how many types of texture maps are there in the game and how were they created?

They were all created with 3D Studio. Other companies use different software. The *Quake* ones are created in

Yeah, we will be working on them straight away.

What, like new levels?

New multi-player levels, new single player levels and possibly new bikers.

What previous experience has the *Forsaken* team had?

There's about 25 to 30 people who have worked on it for the various teams, and most have written video games. One guy designed the levels for *Die Hard Trilogy*, the guy who wrote the PlayStation version of *Forsaken* also wrote *Alien Trilogy*, and the guys who did the PC version worked on games like *FIFA '97* and *Batman Forever*.

Are you going to use the engine to create other games?

Will you be licensing the engine to other companies?

We've been approached by other publishers that wish to

DPaint, and a lot of companies use Photoshop, but we use 3D Studio. How many textures pages are there? Well, I think there is five to a level for the environments, and then there's eight different kinds of the levels. You've got different kinds of environments. You've got capsized ship ones, Biosphere ones, an abandoned subway, there's the Aztec Temple, there's Military, there's the Death Star, er sorry, the Space Station! [laughs], well it looks like the Death Star... and Volcano.

Will there be a level designer coming out for the PC, so you can make your own levels?

Yeah, we have been talking to some third party companies at the moment, and obviously, a lot of companies are interested in doing this. Obviously, we haven't got time to

license it, but we won't because Acclaim technology can only be used by the Acclaim group. And yes, there is a strong possibility our other studios may use it.

Can you tell us more about the enemies? How were they created and what are the AI standards like?

[laughs] Erm, AI? Well, the enemies have the ability to evade an attack, and dodge your weapon. If we wanted to, we could set the AI so that the enemies could dodge every attack and you would never be able to hit them. That would make the game too difficult, so we had varying levels of dodge ability; enemy bikers, for example, can be really good at dodging a shot, whereas the Swarms just go around and walk into your shots. Also, enemies run away when damaged, because sometimes they have good pick-

ups inside them, so you have to chase them and kill 'em to get the pick-up.

What is your favorite version?

My favorite is PC mainly because of the control setup; you have much more freedom with a mouse and keyboard.

How difficult was it to implement the multi-player aspects on the console versions?

Not that difficult, I mean the only thing is, two player on the PlayStation is really good fun, but nothing beats 16 player! Obviously, the PlayStation can't handle that but other than that, two player is really good fun and the frame rate is still really high on the PlayStation. And the same goes for the four player on the N64. Although there are a lot of tricks in there; to try and get as much 'grunt'

out as possible on the four player version.

What games were you playing whilst you were designing the game?

In the early days, it was *Descent*, *Quake*... *Quake 2* hasn't been played too much, *Descent 2* wasn't played much, *Red Alert* was played an awful lot, and for the past year, no, six months, we have hardly played any games at all.

What are your personal favorite types of video games?

Erm, first-person shooters or real-time strategy. Although I will say that as soon as the game is finished, the guys are dying to play *StarCraft*.

We've just got that in the office and everyone says it's fantastic!

I won't let the guys go and buy it yet!

And are you ultimately pleased with the final game?

Absolutely; think multi-player, right? The first year we were working on multi-player and you could tell that we were doing a good game because the guys were playing it when they weren't supposed to. They were supposed to be getting on with their work, but it would be like; "oh! I'm just playing one more level, I'm just testing this bit!", so that's how you could tell. And when you have to tell people to stop playing their own game, you know it's a good game.

Thanks very much, Tony.

Gamers' Republic would like to thank Tony Beckwith, Stephen Root, Brenda, Probe all staff and Acclaim.



In its wake, the original *Bushido Blade* has left a vast array of opinions and sentiments. Especially complaints. Well, 1997's most misunderstood fighter has a shiny new sequel, and for some (like myself), this yields one resounding point: The revolutionary fighter has returned. You see, I "got" the original in every way. I even embraced some of its shortcomings. And if the sequel could simply fix these minor problems, bump-up the speed perhaps, then it would surely be great! Rejoice *Bushido Blade* fans! The sequel is cleaner and meaner, faster and more arcade-like, and while it might take a few games before you can appreciate the differences, you won't miss what was left out from the first game. Prepare to die...again...from just one lethal blow...



BUSHIDO BLADE 2

ONE SLICE TO THE VITALS, DEATH WILL COME!

Story Mode

This is where you'll (hopefully) resolve the conflicts between the two factions. By playing through this mode successfully, and using different characters, you'll reveal the secret playable members of each faction.

Training Mode

You'll battle it out using wooden swords. Learn the complexities of each weapon and perfect the all-important defensive attacks (counters, reversals) before taking on the Story Mode here.



Time-Attack/Slash Mode

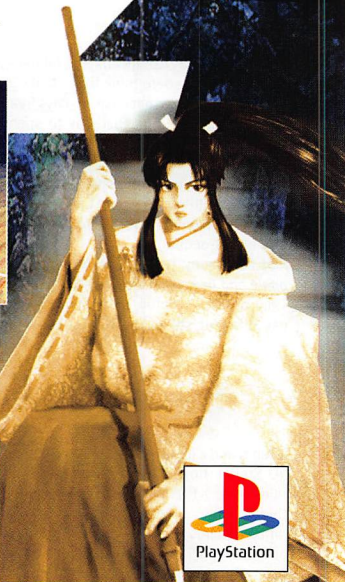
Just like the original *Bushido Blade*, you'll be fighting through 100 skilled ninjas. One important difference: Now you play against the clock. Each time you die, you lose 30 seconds. Beat all 100 enemies in under 15 minutes, and your trigger-happy urges might be quenched.

Blows

While the game still revolves around realistic matches and single, fatal blows to the vitals (the head, heart, stomach), several other types of blows exist: **ORANGE EFFECT:** A light attack. This blow causes injury. **RED EFFECT:** That's it, you're done for. A mortal wound. **BLUE EFFECT:** Indicates a perfectly defended blow. **GREEN EFFECT:** Indicates a weak defense. Unbalances you. **WHITE EFFECT:** Weapons clashing, with each other or objects.

Body Blows

Unlike the first *Bushido*, the sequel has removed the leg damage that rendered a fighter completely 'gimped' on his/her knees. Now, a leg blow slows your walking and running, a blow to the gut slows down your attack speed, and a blow to the arm yields a severe lack of range in your attacks.



カタナ Katana

LENGTH: 98 cm
BLADE: 73.8 cm
AT ARCH: 2.1 cm
WEIGHT: 1.6 kg

The Katana is a totally balanced sword. You can strike at length or in close quarters, and there's a wide variety of attacks and counters at your disposal.

ノダチ Nodachi

LENGTH: 119 cm
BLADE: 93.2 cm
AT ARCH: 3.5 cm
WEIGHT: 2.1 kg

The Nodachi is the traditional weapon of the Narukagami. While it offers a long reach and incredibly powerful blows, speed is compromised due to the deliberate nature of attacks.

ロングソード Long Sword

LENGTH: 89 cm
BLADE: 70 cm
WEIGHT: 1.4 kg

This weapon is double-edged and lighter than the Katana, but doesn't pack the same destructive power. The Dato's advantage lies in its range of combination attacks.

ブロードソード Broad Sword

Length: 115 cm
Blade: 85 cm
Weight: 3.5 kg

If you're looking for the most powerful striking weapon, this is it. Unfortunately it's too slow to allow any quick combinations due to its awesome weight and bulk.

ナギナタ Naginata

Length: 180 cm
Blade: 45 cm
Weight: 1.9 kg

The Naginata is used exclusively by the Narukagami school. Its superior length and reach makes sweeping, slashing, and thrusting from a distance very easy. However, many slow movements may cause hesitation and close-quarters fighting is out of the question. This weapon is a favorite of Narukagami figurehead Mikado.

ヤリ Yari

Length: 182
Blade: 30 cm
Weight: 1.7 kg

The Shainto's immediate answer to the Narukagami's spear weapon, the "Naginata" is the Yari. This spear has an excellent reach, enabling effective, vicious thrusting. It also offers a wide variety of long-range attacks. Similar to the Naginata, though, you'll find it difficult to control when close.

Quite unlike the original, BB2 uses only two attack buttons in conjunction with the stance change button: Frontal and Reverse. With the Frontal attack, your character employs thrusting blows straight forward, without turning his/her arm or wrist. This also includes downward attacks. The Reverse attack typically consists of slashing from the side or overhead strikes, involving a turn of the wrist or a twisting attack... while this may seem simplified compared to the original's three button attack scheme, the actual range of movement has been increased, in all three stances.

DOUBLE ATTACKS, COUNTERS, DEFENSES

Double attack

When weapons collide from a distance, without going near an opponent, it's called 'Sword Touch'. Immediately following the clash, the initiator can launch a Frontal attack for a possible extra hit.

Counters

Similar to the Double-attack, counters can be employed during a weapon clash. In this case, however, it is the character on the short end of the 'Sword Touch' who may launch a counter with the Reverse attack. Timing and positioning is essential here. Without a parry button, you'll have to use other means to defend yourself this time around. These methods are the 'Defenses':

Strong Defense

Pummel your opponent's Frontal attacks with quick Reverse attacks and you can defend yourself as well as begin the next action successfully.

Weak Defense:

Show your Frontal attacks all over the opponent's Reverse attacks, and you should be able to defend yourself. However, you risk losing your balance and eventually your guard in the process.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

Fans of the original *Bushido Blade* have to be looking forward to this great sequel. It's like a streamlined, souped-up version of the original with faster gameplay and more arcade-oriented fights. Also, with the addition of various gameplay modes, a wealth of secret characters to locate, and a gripping storyline, BB2's one-player game is as valuable as its great two player option. Sony's well into the process of localization for a U.S. release, so wait for another couple of months and you can be happily hacking at vitals for days on end. **MIKE GRIFFIN**



It would have been a shame if one of Square's crowning PlayStation achievements never got the chance to prove itself to a different audience. Without a doubt, the PC and console markets are markedly different, with less overlap in player taste than one would initially assume. But when a game as monumental as Square's *FFVII* comes along, it simply must be shared with non-console gamers, if only to let PC players know what they've been missing. And in return, console fans who get a glimpse of *FFVII* running in an accelerated fashion on PC can see just what they've been missing.

I seriously doubt that any readers of this publication need any more info on *FFVII* in its PS guise, so I'll get right to what you're all probably interested in; the changes. Most noticeably, the real time battle scenes benefit from 3D acceleration, rendering them at 30 (as opposed to the PS' 15) frames per second. Mip-mapping, anti-aliasing, and other tricks of the 3D accelerator trade further enhance the look of the battle scenes with astonishing results. Gone is



Spectacular 3D combat sequences



the dithered, framey look of the PS, replaced with a shimmering, 640x480 display of solid looking polys. Call spells have never looked better.

Perhaps less apparent but no less important, minor adjustments have been performed throughout the game's conversion. For instance, many of the pre-rendered backgrounds have been tweaked visually to accommodate the PC's high resolution displays, and the sound has been upgraded as well, with Yamaha's XG MIDI software dramatically improving the quality.

Currently at about 70 percent through the conversion process, PC gamers looking for a taste of Japanese console brilliance have quite an adventure ahead of them this Summer.

Mike Hobbs



The Square RPG sensation hits the PC!
Featuring faster frame rates with 3D-accelerated graphics!

FINAL FANTASY VII

Join Cloud in the most epic adventure ever witnessed on a console!
Now PC owners can look forward to high-res graphics and 30 fps action!



Square has a treat for Final Fantasy freaks and PC gamers of all walks of life. It's *FFVII* PC, coming this summer in full, 3D accelerated glory. Will it find a whole new legion of fans, or is this graphically stunning game too much of a console RPG for PC players?

Since it began, 32-bit gaming has bestowed us with countless quality titles in every genre, except the Action RPG. This is a category that surely is a prime candidate to benefit from newer technology, but instead remains slow burning. So why have developers not stoked the fire? Perhaps that is what Chase (including ex-members of Falcom and Quintet) were thinking when they conceptualized *Granstream Saga*; the first 32-bit Action RPG to utilize the PlayStation's 3D graphical capabilities.

Granstream Saga has you assuming the role of Lune, an aspiring young adventurer destined to fight his way through a series of varied environments and eventually face Satan himself in a showdown of

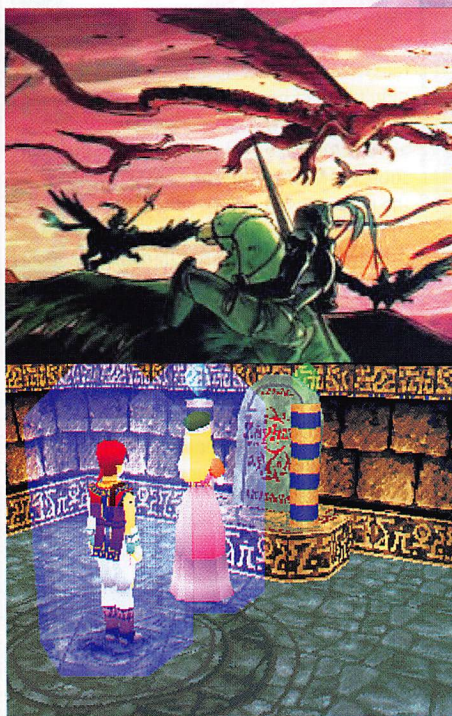
The battle mechanics are more reminiscent of a fighting game, but the game never loses that RPG flavor.

unparalleled consequence. Although the concept and story are not exactly post-modern, the environments and execution definitively are.

Unlike the PlayStation's most recent Action RPG, *Alundra*, *Granstream Saga*'s surroundings and characters are all polygonal, which strongly accentuates the game's overall aesthetic appeal. The textures are bright and detailed, and the look is spruced up even further with some impressive visual effects, cinematic camera swoops, interspersed anime sequences, and a frame rate that hovers at or just below 60 fps. However, what really pokes the fire is *Granstream Saga*'s battle system. When encountering an enemy, the camera shifts to a closer perspective and the gameplay transforms into something of a fighting game (shallow, but it's something). This unique approach provides an experience of the likes not yet accomplished in any Action RPG to date. This is one for all Action RPG fans (and even those seeking to enter the genre) to look forward to. **DAVE REES**

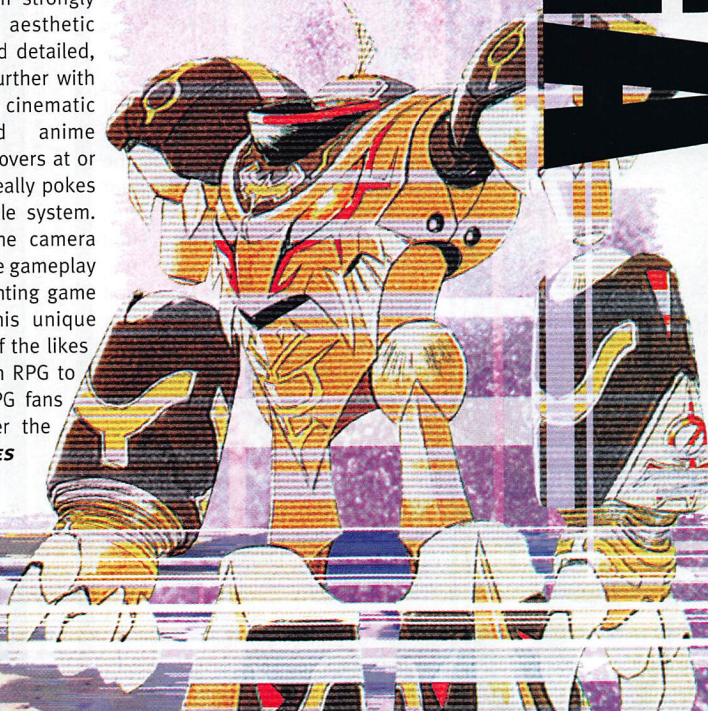
The Faceless race is back.

If you were a fan of the King's Field series, you might recognize some of the character design. It is definitely one of *Granstream Saga*'s low points.



GRANSTREAM SAGA

Swooping cameras and anime cut-scenes add cinematic depth to the story telling.



A genuinely new Action RPG experience is a scarcity these days.

Full 360 degree viewing adds to the gameplay...

LEGACY KAIN OF SOUL REAVER

Blood Omen, Kain's first outing, sold sizable numbers and provided many an RPG fiend with a beautifully rendered and lengthy quest to indulge in (lengthy not least because the load times were so astronomical), and we knew it wouldn't be long before this vampiric tale was made into a sequel. What we didn't expect however, was the nature of this follow up... Firstly, this adventure takes place in Nosgoth 1000 years after the first game, with the player assuming the role of Raziel, the resurrected corpse of Kain's insubordinate vampiric lieutenant. Now a sworn enemy of this arch demon, Raziel plots his revenge. Fortunately, he has more than sharp words (and fangs) to back up his Lost Boy demeanor; Raziel is a dark angel of death and retribution, seeking the souls of renegade vampires which he swallows into his gaping maw.

Boasting "dramatically evolved gameplay" (meaning it's like *Tomb Raider* and not a top-down RPG with bad loading), the most impressive feature is the graphical engine chucking around the polygons to deliver environments that not only look larger than *Tomb Raider's* but are more detailed with smoother textures. The viewing distance is especially impressive, with fog effects masking the pop-in so the game appears rather like a Nintendo 64 release. The freedom of movement and character animation, although early, looked impressive, but the levels themselves stole the show for me. Boasting supremely gothic environments such as high vaulted ceilings and crumbling catacombs, the textured gargoyles and general musty flavor has been enhanced to no end.

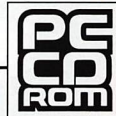
Aside from the fully 3D movement, your character can engage in hand-to-hand combat with a number of frothing adversaries, many of which are vampiric in origin (from the ten classes in the game). There's the usual (and not so usual) array of puzzles to solve, blocks to shove into gaps, wings with which to glide down massively detailed chasms, a host of spells to utilize, flamboyant voice-overs ("Ack, thou challengest me to a duel, with that foul countenance? Have at ye, abhoration!"; you know the sort) and the coolest way to consume an enemy yet seen in a video game; Raziel lifts a face scarf to reveal an empty maw which extends into his chest cavity... and swallows your soul! With these type of effects added to a solid and involving quest, Kain looks to be a cabalistic and involving romp into a world of dark terror. *DAVID HODGSON*

Perhaps the most beautiful graphics ever to grace the PlayStation console... classic 3D adventuring awaits...

DO GAMES NEED TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO A 3D TOMB RAIDERESQUE WORLD? WITH THE ADVENT OF DUKE MOVING HIS GUN-TOTTING BACKSIDE INTO THE 3D ADVENTURE GENRE, AND NOW THE SOUL REAVER HIMSELF, WE'RE DEFINITELY SEEING AN OUTBREAK OF THIS TYPE OF GAME, AND A NUMBER OF CROSS-OVER TITLES, SUCH AS TENCHU.

A masked vampire on a quest from the dead...

THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN



MIGHT & MAGIC

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT NEW WORLD COMPUTING'S 12 YEAR OLD EPIC MIGHT AND MAGIC SERIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN AIMED AT ROLE-PLAYING PURISTS. EACH EPISODE BOASTS RICHLY CONTRIVED WORLDS, COMPLEX CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, ABSORBING QUESTS, AND LABORIOUS PUZZLES; ALL HIGHLY INDICATIVE OF THE GENRE. IN FACT, BECAUSE M&M GAMES ARE ALWAYS SO REPLETE WITH DETAIL, DEVELOPMENT TIMES ARE ALWAYS LONG, LEAVING FANS (ALL 3.5 MILLION WORLDWIDE BY THE WAY) ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE NEXT CHAPTER. WELL, CHAPTER SIX IS NOW UPON US AND IT NOT ONLY TRANSCENDS ITS PREDECESSORS, BUT ALSO BOLDLY CLAIMS TO BE TEN TIMES LARGER THAN ANY PRIOR RPG. I STOPPED BY NEW WORLD

COMPUTING TO GET THE DETAILS.

Surprisingly, the story of *M&M VI - the Mandate of Heaven* begins where *Heroes of Might and Magic II* left off (rather than *M&M V*). Scott McDaniel, project manager of *M&M VI* explains: "The story originates about ten years after *Heroes of Might and Magic II* ends, and it's under the assumption that the good Prince Roland won and Archibald was thrown out. So he's now a King and it's ten years into his reign, and he has a son. And then all of a sudden, these catastrophes start to happen, so he goes off to explore those and disappears. Everybody assumes that he's dead at this stage and the son is only ten years old so the City Council has all of these various factions and they're really just feuding amongst themselves; they're not helping the town at all." Thereafter, an invasion of the land by demons ensues and it is up to you to subdue the unrest that now threatens the land.

Might and Magic has always been revered for its detailed character parties, but this time around, you can expect a slight twist. Although the classes have been reduced to just six in number (Knight, Paladin, Archer, Cleric, Sorcerer, and Druid), they have been highly augmented with a skill-based development system. Player experience points are distributed as normal, but a bonus pool of points can be applied to various skills, which can eventually be mastered. According to Scott McDaniel, "Even though we dispensed with three different classes and multiple races, we've added a lot more gameplay."

Unfortunately, *Might and Magic VI* will not support 3dfx cards (the engine code was

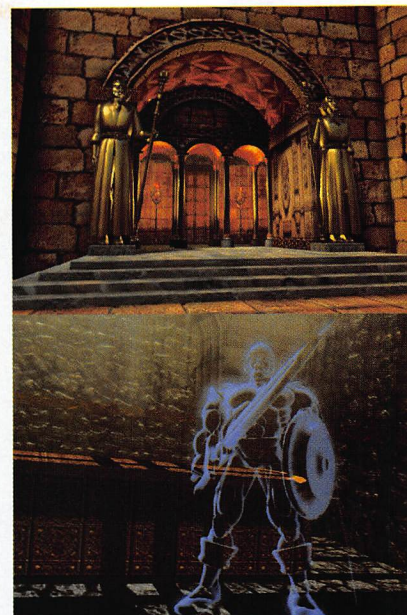
apparently too far advanced before the 3dfx craze came about), which amounts to an archaic visual presence that mixes 3D rendered sprites (many of the enemies are wonderfully rendered however) with 3D polygonal landscapes. But even so, with two 3D engines - the Horizon Engine and the Labyrinth Engine

M&M VI still takes a terrific leap into the next generation, and loses absolutely nothing in the gameplay department. The Horizon Engine brings the panoramic outdoor environments to life in real-time while the Labyrinth engine is utilized when trekking through the dungeons spread throughout the land. Mr. McDaniel explains the Horizon Engine: "The horizon engine is a height mapped polygonal-based engine. We refuse to deal with the polygonal monsters. Actually for trees and everything we're using 3D

rendered sprites. You could only have so many polygons before you start clogging down any kind of graphics engine, or any kind of graphics card. So this allows us to have really clean looking monsters and environment, and still be able to have smooth scrolling..." The

Labyrinth Engine is used when traversing the infamous dungeons spread about and splashes some nifty lighting into the bag which provides plenty of creepy ambience. And to make the battle scenarios much more manageable (and perhaps keep the "culture shock" to a minimum), NWC left the turn-based engine of old intact. With the tap of a key, battles change from a real-time frag fests, to much less frenetic strategic encounters.

With their unprecedented experience and honorable history, New World Computing will surely find it hard not to succeed with *Might and Magic VI*. Certainly those who have enjoyed the series over the past several years won't be disappointed, and anyone (whether they ever played an *M&M* game or not) willing to put in the effort, will find this sixth chapter of the ongoing saga to be a rewarding experience. **DAVE REES**



The popular selling tool known as the AMMA Parental Advisory states that *Mortal Kombat 4* involves "Life-like Violence. Strong. Contains selected graphic scenes involving human-like characters engaged in intense combative activity". The GR Gamers' Advisory states that *Mortal Kombat 4* involves "A lackluster effort to cash in on an already old style of beat-'em-up. Out-dated. Possible interest lies in pseudo 3D backdrops and polygonal characters engaged in disjointed and antiquated combative activity."

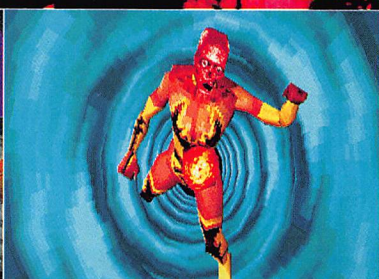
MORTAL KOMBAT 4

There's nothing quite like flogging a dead horse. Capcom know it. SNK know it. Eidos are beginning to know it. And boy, do Midway know it. The *Mortal Kombat* series (MK 1, MK2, MK 3, *Ultimate MK 3*, *MK Trilogy*, *MK Mythologies: The Adventures of Sub-Zero* and now *Mortal Kombat 4*) has proved that palette-swapped ninjas juddering about the screen and opening up their foe's main arteries generates more money than a Travolta movie, and that is an established fact. This particular expired stallion has been flogged, resurrected, then mangled some more, and only now seems to be less sure-footed in the 'mountains-of-cash' generating department. The arcade version of the game, although boasting some minor gameplay 'enhancements' (including motion-captured characters, pseudo-3D backdrops and bulky weapons produced (David Copperfield-style) from copious back pockets) which served to entertain some, never took the arcades by storm like the previous incarnations. Even with the Power VR Zeus hardware chugging out the polygons and blanket PR coverage, the pretty graphics failed to detract from one overwhelming fact; the gameplay remained stunningly unoriginal and almost stale, and no amount of blood-letting was going to change that. The carnage present in previous versions was a novelty; now it was expected... along with some intensive additions to the tactical nature of the fights, and Messers Boon and Tobias chose the easy way out; again hiding a lack of innovation in an ocean of blood, entrails and gore.

So it comes down to the console versions of the game. Having just emerged from countless days of *Tekken 3*, *Mortal Kombat 4* landed in my PlayStation with a dull, wet thud. Despite the lack of fatalities in the version received and the unfinished nature of the game (therefore all opinions expressed are on a very incomplete version of the game), we studied the 3D backgrounds and characters with a creeping sensation of horror. Of course, we expected Shinnok, Jarek and the gang to have less of a stage presence in a cut-down port-over, but these guys are stunted dwarven versions of their Zeus-powered brethren. The problems didn't end there either, as the 3D backgrounds lacked any of the polish of the arcade; indeed, the walls look horribly pixelly up close, and the characters themselves look very limited and chunky when compared to the supremely polished polygonal combatants of other contemporary fighting games. The main problem of the motion-captured characters is that they flick instantly from one move to another without any fluidity whatsoever; a problem which plagued the

arcade counterpart and left Sub Zero and Chums looking like manniquined approximations of humans. I've a feeling that without the MK logo, this would be a startlingly average fighter.

Star Trek fans will be pleased to note that the Commander Worf soundalike still laughs mockingly at you and asks for fatalities, beginners to fighting games (or gamers who simply don't want the hassle of actually employing intense tactical decisions when fighting) will be ecstatic to learn that only the rudiments of beat-'em-up lore are included (around six 'signature' moves per character, spiritless combos, but buckets of blood and the usual spine-ripping endings to the bout providing your joypad is wiggled in the appropriately fraught manner). Personally, I thought *Mortal Kombat* lost it when Christopher Lambert wasn't picked for the dreadful *MK: Annihilation* movie; and the whole MK cavalcade has been hurtling toward a very vertical cliff-top ever since, but what the hell do I know? Midway are set to prove me incorrect and deliver the gamer exactly what he wants; more of the same. The question now remains; do readers of Gamers' Republic want more of MK in this fair tome; do we have to hire an MK fiend to put me straight on a couple of points, or should we just forget what is essentially a reshaped version of the pinnacle of 1991 beat-'em-ups? Your opinions would be appreciated. Write to me and we'll set this straight once and for all: Is *Mortal Kombat 4*; fantastic and fun, or the beginning of the end for fighting games? DAVID HODGSON



Blood-letting on an unsurpassed scale... in 3D!



THE RPG THAT DEBUTED AT #1 IN JAPAN

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a real-time fighting engine and exquisite animation sequences.



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Are we going to be mesmerized by Square magic once again?
This game looks simply amazing... but what is beyond that?



Resonance



At first glance, *Parasite Eve* could be seen as Square's answer to the *Resident Evil* series. If you have nothing more than screenshots as reference it is easy to see how this mistake could be made, as the characters, and the overall look, is very similar to Capcom's horror title. This is certainly not the case. *Parasite Eve* is an RPG, through and through. You gain experience and raise levels, learn "magic", find weapons and items in chests, there are NPCs to interact with and the fights are technically turn-based. Even the walking-around engine in *Parasite Eve* is more closely related to *Final Fantasy VII* than any other game, as the simple control is taken directly from Square's record-breaking RPG.

Yet, unlike *Final Fantasy VII*, Square's latest title is not an epic. In fact, if you take away the jaw-dropping cinemas, you have a good game (and that's pushing it) that could have been great, if not for the fact the developers were apparently more interested in the CG aspect rather than the actual game. Look at it this way; Square's latest RPG has one playable character, a handful of spells and items, only a few locations to explore and a play time that averages around eight hours. What do we get in return? Well, a truckload of beautiful CG movies and the ability to dodge in



Fusion



Selection

[p a r a s i t e]

The Eve of destruction is upon us...

The powers of good and evil fight for supremacy!

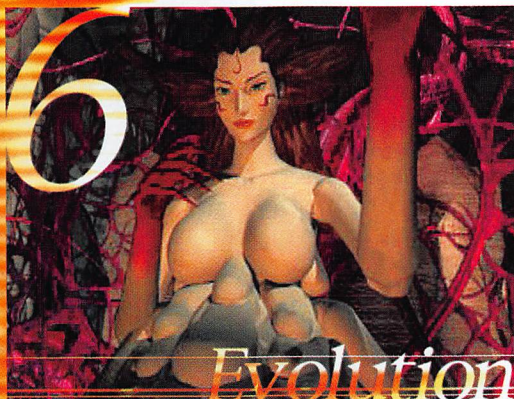


battles. Um... Beyond the lack of gameplay, we also have a strangely unimpressive graphics engine with characters models that are lacking to the ones you'll find in *Resident Evil 2*; backgrounds that are few in number and animate horribly, and no examples of now-standard effects (such as light sourcing) to be found anywhere. Hell, I could spend pages just ranting about the apparent lack of attention Square gave *Parasite Eve* in its smaller details (which all could be seemingly fixed in a matter of days), but I really don't have the room. Let's just say when a character



The World is in grave danger and time is running out!!

The birth of a new era that will close the chapter known as mankind...



is supposed to be picking up a phone, and reaches a few feet away from the unit and grabs air to make the call, there's something wrong.

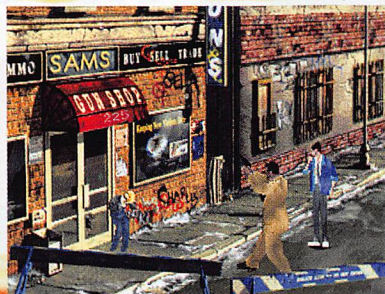
There are a few aspects of *Parasite Eve* besides the CG that keep it from being a total clunker though, mainly the battle experience. Having a turn-based fight in real-time is an enjoyable variation to your standard RPG confrontation, and some of the bosses are simply incredible to behold. The music, at least for the most part, is very good, although it could benefit from a few more tracks. And the overall modern theme and storyline is quite cool, almost comparable to a Sci-Fi Channel original movie with a huge budget. There's even an "EX" mode after you beat the game that features a new dungeon, not that I really feel like playing through it again of course.

I know it sounds like I'm being a bit harsh on *Parasite Eve* (especially this being a preview and all), but this was a game I was really looking forward to. The pictures alone made it look great, and the Square name attached just solidified my desire. If (or better yet, when) *Parasite Eve* makes it to our shores, I just pray Square adds some content and fixes the minor detail problems. If not, our store shelves will be graced with yet another beautiful, but mediocre game.

RYAN LOCKHART

Battle scenes are excellent with incredible creatures to fight!

Turn-based battles in real-time make for an exciting change in RPGs!



t e e v e

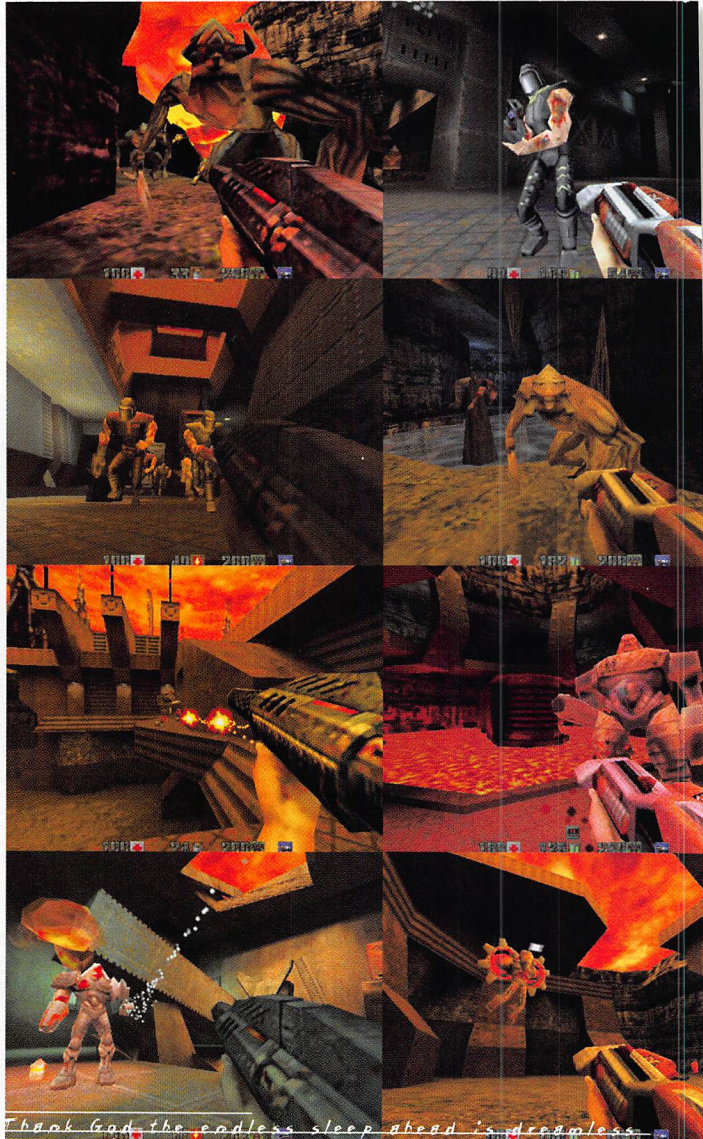
Can *Quake 2* be any better? While all of the buzz continues to fly regarding *Quake 2* spin-offs and expansion packs, id has recently announced that they are sticking with their guns and developing *Quake 3* over their more ambitious project, *Trinity*. Although innovation is what the industry needs more than anything right now, this move will surely keep the many *Quake 2* fans happy...

New weapons include the vicious Ion Ripper!
A powerful energy gun that fires a deadly stream of ricocheting particles.

Although we've not seen it in action, *Quake 2 Mission Pack: The Reckoning* looks to be an astonishing addition to what many consider to be the pinnacle of all corridor games. Xatrix, developers of the add-on, have been working in close accord with id to formulate this first veritable extension and claim that it will redefine the benchmark by which all future add-ons will be measured.

From what we have scrounged up so far, players will be required to penetrate an alien city and romp through industrial settings, aqueducts, air passageways, canyons, caves and then secretly hitch a ride on an alien spacecraft to eliminate a hidden lunar base. Tactfully concealed amongst the lavish new surroundings will be new alien lifeforms named Gekks; a collection of intelligent stalkers with acidic blood (their jibs are corrosive!) that leap from the shadows and strike with razor-sharp talons. But to even out the score, the added instruments of war will push the envelope of shock to levels not yet seen or heard. The Trap, for example, sucks a creature into itself and subsequently spits out edible chunks of pulpy fare for your consumption; think portable human cuisinart. And those who find the Ion Cannon a bit too precise will surely relish in the Phalanx Particle Cannon's trigger effect: TWO highly accelerated magnesium projectiles. But perhaps more importantly, fans of the almighty Deathmatch will be happy to hear that the mission pack will also include some specially designed frag arenas.

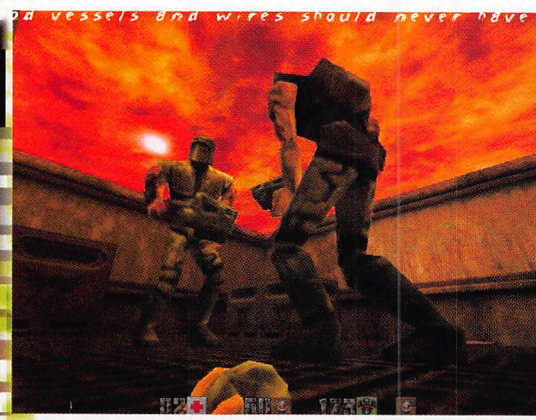
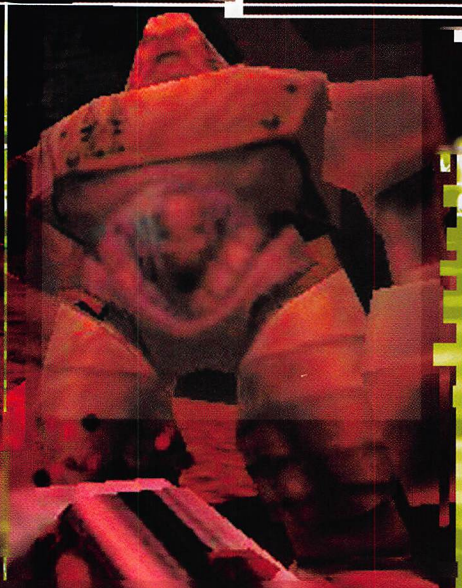
With 15 all-new mission-based theatres of operation, particularly cunning enemies, some deliciously twisted weapons, and new multi-player maps, Xatrix is bringing us more of what gamers already can't get enough of. **Dave Rees**



id Software's first Official Mission Pack

QUAKE II

THE RECKONING



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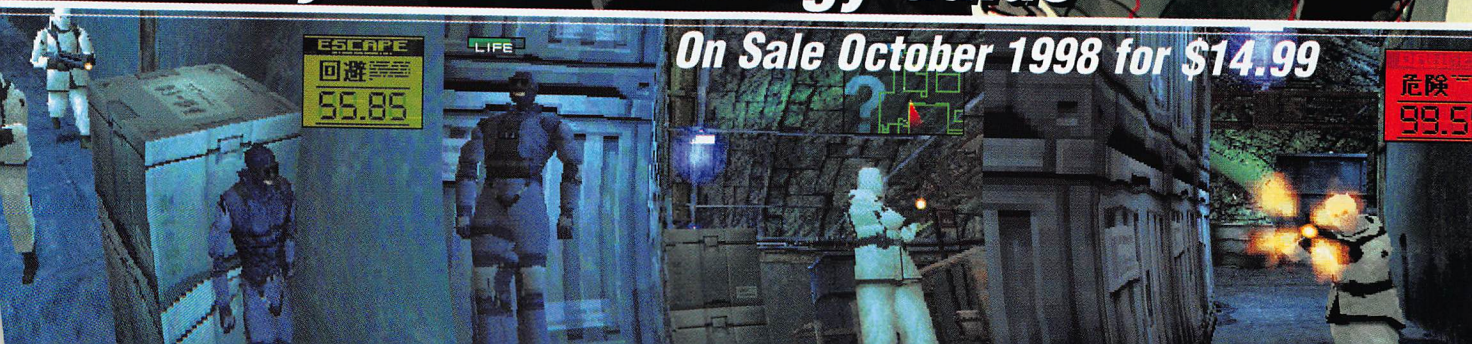
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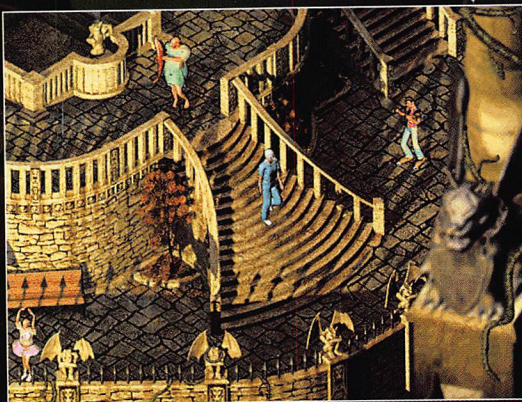
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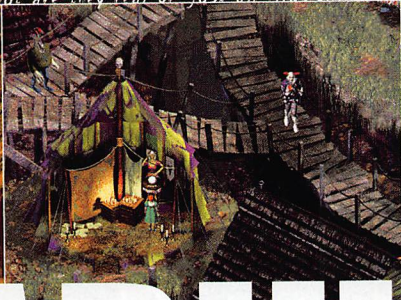
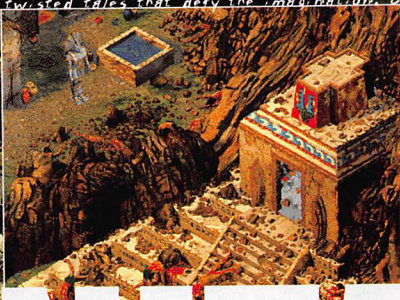


Is that you Mother? ..Mother?



What would be your definition of creeping abhorrence? Perhaps the realization that you're trapped inside a decaying mental institution with more freaks than a Jerry Springer audition? Suffering from amnesia, ensnared in an asylum with curiosities for company (such as frothing folk, old men dressed in tutus and a lunatic with a giant fish), and no way out of this gothic fortress? How about hideous burns covering your face, and snippets of your past flashing back into your memory at random? Then perhaps you'd like to be transported, by an angel into a backwater hamlet where the only inhabitants are an assortment of grotesquely deformed children

A series of twisted tales that defy the imagination. But are they real or just an illusion? Only you can discover the truth...



SANITARIUM

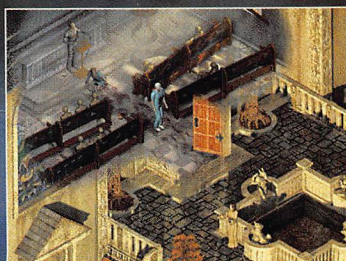
A man called Max with no memory... A twisted nightmare for him, an intriguing adventure for you...

**Wondrous realms of madness await the brave adventurer!
Can you survive the Sanitarium?**

What is going on? Where am I?

("they call me lumpy, Mister!") and a huge pulsating plant behemoth known only as 'Mother'. But the hideousness doesn't end there, either... this wouldn't be a Lovecraftian foreboding fest without the shock troops of any trek into terror; Carnival freaks!! Yes, from fairgrounds to pumpkin plantations, all the finest mutations are out in force, and the true unspeakable horrors lie further into your on-going quest to find out just exactly what secrets the Sanitarium holds...

Evoking the spirit of point-and-click adventures of nonce and yore (such as the seminal *Shadows of the Comet*), ASC are set to release a game more terrifying, unnerving and just downright horrific than all that have shuffled and gibbered before. Melding super-detailed environments with amazing animation and particularly memorable voice-acting (some of the children's dialects are wonderfully eerie in a *Children of the Corn*-type manner), instantly creating the foreboding atmosphere that permeates this release. When little Billy's skin flaps in the stale breeze, you'll realize that these kids are quite at ease with the fact that their faces are falling off... If ever a game was to acquire a mature rating for all the right reasons, this is it. Featuring classic puzzles so fiendish you'll start twitching with insanity itself, we'll review this amazing title next issue... *David Hodgson*



Who am I??



Creator of Ubi Soft's most notable action title, *Rayman*, Michael Ancel is up to his old tricks, except this time he's not limited to a 2D landscape. In fact, making *Tonic Trouble* for the Nintendo 64 and PC, he's not very limited at all. I guess that's why when I saw this game running (the accelerated PC version) my jaw dropped to the floor and my eyes sprang out from their sockets. You see I am a lonely action platform fan. I like all things jumpy. This would include Bandicoots, Hedgehogs, Geckos, Elves, a street kid named Hermie, a wonderdog, a couple of Gunstar Heroes, Mystical Ninjas, Battletoads, Apes, anyone named Belmont and, er, Rayman. All of these funky creations fall directly through my mail slot. Very soon I'll be adding another little mongrel to my list...

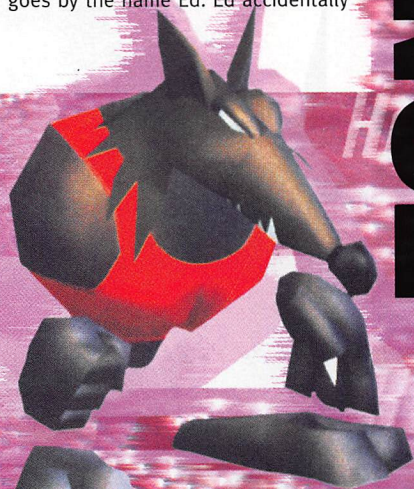
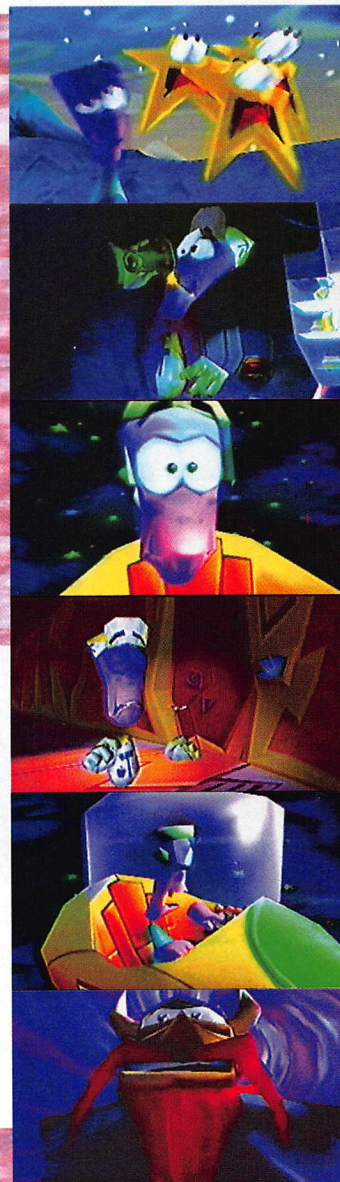
Pre-production began on *Tonic Trouble* in July of '96 and it shows. The shots on this page (some grabbed from video) and some (these would be the clearer ones) from Ubi direct, do not even begin to do the game justice. The introduction alone is practically indescribable using conventional gaming terminology. A standard CG affair this is not. This is almost Namco quality CG animation applied to a universe even more bizarre than Rayman's. The game itself plays out on pixel-free cartoon environments rich with color and an almost *Alice in Wonderland* meets Warner Bros. feel. Our hero is a violet-colored ET who goes by the name Ed. Ed accidentally

TONIC TROUBLE

A much-needed dose of magic for the Nintendo 64 and PC, and a tribute to 1980s...

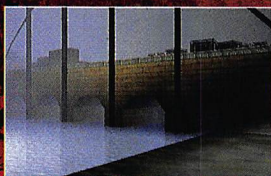
drops an experimental can during a scientific expedition (this is the condensed version mind you), and unleashes a mutation that effects plant, animal, human; you name it. The goal of the game is to retrieve the can from its captor. Grogh the Hellish, who's trying to harness the can's powers and declare himself (what else) Master of Earth. A 3D action game is born! Now I'm going to quote some impressive technical jargon from the press junket. Ready? OK, here goes. Says Gregoire Gobbi; "The game was built with a proprietary 3D integration tool and modular, scaleable engine developed by 50 Ubi soft developers over an 18-month period at a cost of four million dollars". Quite simply, judging by what I've seen, Gregoire has every right to boast about the engine, *Tonic Trouble* may set a 3D benchmark. The level of character AI, depth of horizon and interactivity would (and will) fill a lot more space. I'll return next month with some visuals good enough to match my enthusiasm.

DAVE HALVERSON



Fairy tale worlds and Tolkein-like adventures...
Inspired by LucasArt's Day of the Tentacle and Nintendo's Zelda...



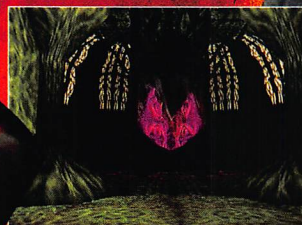


Promising more incredible monsters, huge sprawling levels, and now with less fog than ever before, this 16 MEG follow-up to the outrageously successful *Turok* should deliver even more than the original jungle romp; not least because the *Turok 2* team has twice as much memory to play with, and the game's been in development for a year. Perhaps the biggest news for fans of both *Turok* and the 3D corridor blast-'em-up in general is that team Iguana have been covertly gunning each other down in the name of Her Majesty's Secret Service (i.e. they've been playing *Goldeneye* rather a lot recently), and have vowed to provide the same gameplay in *Turok 2*'s four player Deathmatch mode; a prospect we're getting quite giddy in anticipation about...

For now however, we'll have to contend ourselves with these game shots to provide indication of the graphical prowess to come. As you'll see, the jungle elements of *Turok* are present and correct, but a load more textures have been crammed into the levels, and the rainforest levels soon give way to a more futuristic set of zones including a brooding alien world. Also present are enhanced particle effects; such as shards of an exploding cart which bounce and arch with spectacular randomness.

Now onto the wealth of *Turok* rumors; including a description of a boss known as the Pur-linn Bombardier; a huge hulking lizard ape adorned with a massive backpack stocked with metal balls which he fires at you with grim determination through some sort of pulsating chute. What makes this even more special?

The way the chute fires...



FIRESEED STEPS BACK INTO THE FRAY...

TUROK 2

SERIOUS SEQUEL TIME.

Following the progress of this game from inception to release is just part of the fun; a couple of us are readying ourselves for what shall be the most outlandishly lavish and detailed attempt at a strategy guide ever undertaken; the Millennium Publications Official *Turok 2* Strategy Guide. With this kind of access to the development of *Turok 2*, expect all manner of exciting and interesting chatter over the coming months...



The smooth-skinned and stretchy texture maps mean the balls shoot through a 'hose-style' chute and you'll see the 'hose' warp and stretch around the ball until it pops out. Sounds quite cool, doesn't it? That's what enhanced Nintendo preparatory tools can do for you (despite the fact that many of the screenshots on this page

aren't actually from the final N64 version)! We've also heard about a 'skull fountain' of flowing blood and bones, not to mention a comely Indian giantess (called Adon) giving you level information! Check back with us next month. **DAVID HODGSON**





Super-Fast, High-Resolution mayhem!
Will Unreal take the crown as the number one first-person action adventure?

UNREAL

Immerse yourself in incredible 3D worlds...

As you flip through this issue of *Gamers' Republic*, you'll be struck by the realization that there's a veritable plague of isometric futuristic real-time strategy fests, and an equal epidemic of games paying homage to *Quake* and the 3D corridor shooter. This is simply because, from a technological point of view, no console can touch the superiority of these games (both graphically and gameplay-wise) and their most unique feature; multi-player gaming. This mentality has driven Epic MegaGames and Digital Extremes into the creation of the aptly titled *Unreal*, a first-person action adventure where the plot becomes secondary to a stealthy trek into the unknown, collecting increasingly bizarre and hugely damaging pieces of killing ordinance and blast away anything even remotely resembling an enemy. Touting your title as "unreal" means that it has to be one hell of a great-looking game; and thankfully the title looks to be living up to this promise; you've got your transparent water, randomly flickering flames, clouds casting shadows, and dynamic lighting that all adds up to a veritable visual banquet. Those of you that have witnessed the power present in Voodoo2 technology know what to expect; we're talking the king of accelerated graphics here, especially when the entities encountered are extremely detailed polygonal enemies (as you'd expect); so lavish in fact that they boast more than 300 frames of animation each.

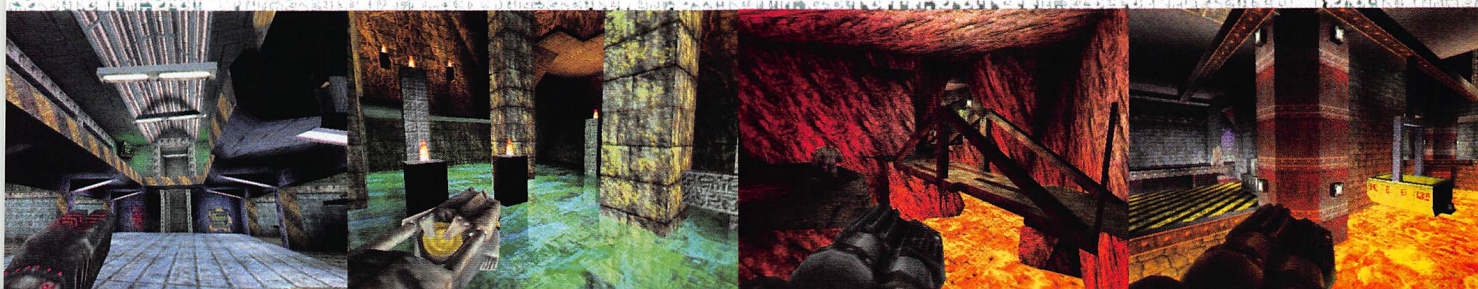
Add some notably cunning artificial intelligence (courtesy of Steven Polge, the guy behind the creation of the *Quake* Reaper Bots), some weird portal technology allowing a warping from the 'true' 3D level design, levels which include both the interior and exterior of ancient ruins, castles, spacecraft, mines, some rather natty ways of taking down alien scum thanks to masses of throbbing weaponry and a level editor, and you've got the winning *Quake* formula wrapped up in an even glossier coat. We'll return to see if the gameplay's up to par next issue...

David Hodgson

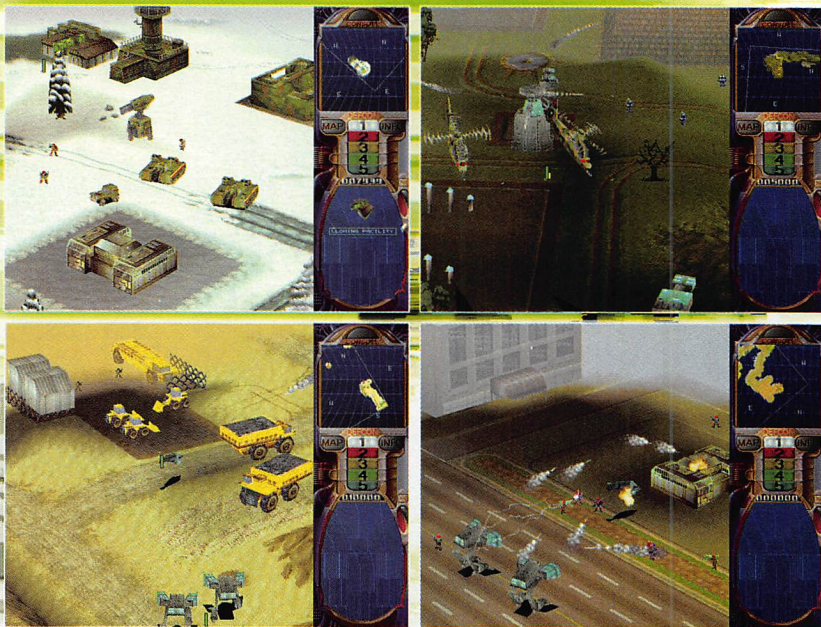


Prepare to enter the new dimension in 3D gameplay!

Despite the fact that no one rarely cares for even a semblance of plot synopsis in these types of games (seriously, how many of you know the story to *Quake*?), *Unreal* is set to transport you (and a few of your buddies if your modem can handle it) to a beautiful, yet deadly planet. Strange alien races battle with each other in what can only be described as a "Bermuda Triangle in space"... hopefully without the vocal talents and incidental music of Barry Manilow.



Joining the seemingly endless parade of real-time strategy games for the PC comes *Wargames* from MGM Interactive and Interactive Studios. Set 20 years after the events depicted in the 80s Matthew Broderick film, *Wargames* pits the forces of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense) against the supercomputer WOPR and its futuristic forces. Featuring scenarios design assisted by the original film's director, John Badham, *Wargames* takes C&C-style gameplay into the third dimension. With fifty unique units to build and command, and thirty campaign-based missions, players should have no shortage of strategy thrills. Naturally, multiplayer support will be included (though we couldn't get our preview copy to work over our network here) including LAN, modem, and internet with Mplayer. *Wargames* will also support a number of 3D accelerator cards for silky smooth real-time graphics. Look for *WG* for this summer. Thus far, it looked to be an excellent isometric battle festival, though we only had one level that actually worked.



"Roger that control... fire by fire... standing by..."

PC version



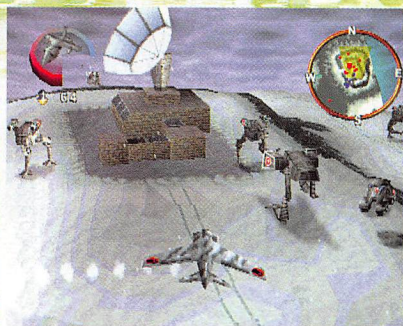
In 1983, a Hacker nearly destroyed the world with a TRS-80

WARGAMES

The cream of NORAD is prepped for dust-off at your command. WOPR must be destroyed!

Imagine the Havoc You Can Wreak Today

Return Fire meets Command and Conquer... prepare yourself!



PlayStation players will get a very different game experience than their PC compatriots as the PS version throws building units and much of the PC game's strategy out the window. Instead, PS owners will get a far more action oriented game with some basic unit commanding abilities mixed into the melee. Rather than building and managing units, the PS version gives you all the vehicles you will need for any given mission. This greatly simplifies matters, allowing the player to get into the game more quickly (why is it always assumed that console gamers have no patience?). Console *Wargames* features a two-player split-screen mode in the absence of any networking capabilities, and the engine at this early stage handles it well. Carrying the subtitle of *Defcon 1*, look for PlayStation *Wargames* roughly around the same time as the PC version. **MIKE HOBBS**

XenoGears is an exceptionally important game for Square. If you think about it, this title is the first fully original "traditional" 32-bit RPG they've attempted. So naturally, I expected a lot from this major company's new release, yet found myself a bit disappointed by the final product. Don't get me wrong though; XenoGears certainly isn't a bad game, it just isn't an example of Square's greatest work.

Without a doubt, XenoGears' biggest attribute is the fully 3D polygonal environments along with the impressive-looking character sprites that inhabit them. While this isn't the first game to allow you to "swing" the camera around your characters (Grandia already let us experience this months ago), XenoGears receives high marks for presenting it with such a degree of detail. Aside

and simply lacks vibrant life of Grandia's environments. Although we can't hope for a change in the graphic department, there's a chance Square will 'fix' some of the problems dealing with the battles if XenoGears ever makes it to our shores. There hasn't been an official announcement yet, but if the success that FFVII has experienced is any indication of how popular RPGs are becoming in America, the chances of a domestic release are almost certain. **RYAN LOCKHART**

KENO GEARS

from the polygon areas, XenoGears also differentiates itself from Final Fantasy VII (the game it will be naturally compared to) with a battle system based on magic and items combos rather than on magic and items (although these still exist in a slightly lesser scale). As the game progresses, you'll find yourself learning more and more button-inputted combos, which in turn take longer to perform, but lend to more devastating attacks. Along with your standard party, at times you'll also find yourself in control of Gears (giant mechs). These can be used to explore some of the less impressive dungeons and to fight at times using a similar, but simplified, combination system.

XenoGears is also complimented by an intricate story featuring deep religious overtones, good voice acting (a first for a Square RPG), competent music (by Yasunori Mitsuda, of Chrono Trigger fame) and plenty of high quality animated cut scenes. While this all sounds great, there are a few problems. The battle engine, while unique in concept, turns extremely tiresome in practice. Some of those combos take much too long to execute, and they get old... fast. And the graphical quality, while simply breathtaking at times, is quite often too drab



PREVIEW

1. A SMALL GLIMPSE AT THE WEALTH OF FORTHCOMING SOFTWARE IN DEVELOPMENT AND OUT SOON.

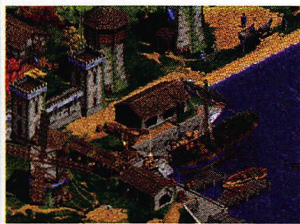
2. A BRIEF SYNOPSIS PROVIDES YOU WITH ESSENTIAL FEATURES ON THE GAME'S MAIN ATTRactions.

3. LOOK FOR MORE DETAILED COVERAGE OF THESE TITLES IN FUTURE ISSUES OF GAMERS' REPUBLIC.

AGE OF EMPIRES 2

DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT AVAILABLE: FALL '98

Microsoft certainly knows a good game when they see it. One of the few titles to successfully compete with incredible offerings from Blizzard and Westwood already has a sequel in the works, even though the original has only been out for less than a year. Aptly titled *Age of Empires II*, this real-time strategy game improves on its prequel by offering both improved gameplay and graphics. Now players will have more control over their troops with new commands and the ability to use military formations (leading to much more tactical battles), water battles will be updated as players can ram or board enemy ships and diplomacy topics and tactics (such as economic and military alliances) will be encouraged and easier to use. This is on top of the new units, structure types and civilizations. Look for more coverage as *Age of Empires II* nears its release date, currently scheduled for this fall.



AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS PUBLISHER: TBA AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER

Whatever you may think about *Gex: Enter the Gecko*, there's no denying the power of Crystal's 3D engine on display. Not ones to sit idle on such great technology, the *Gex* engine is fast becoming the workhorse of the Crystal 3D lineup. The latest title to make use of this bit of kit is *Akuji the Heartless*. A million miles away from *Gex*'s light and amusing theme, *Akuji* is a dark and sinister game featuring a lead character whose heart has been ripped out and banished to hell. There, you must master voodoo and find the souls of your ancestors before returning to the earthly realm. With supposedly highly intelligent camera systems, excellent enemies from the consciousness of a sick mind and proficient enemy AI routines, *Akuji* should be another feather in Crystal's cap. If it turns out to be a stuffed turkey instead, you'll be first to read about the *GR* sacrifice... Haitian style!



AZURE DREAMS

DEVELOPER: KONAMI PUBLISHER: KONAMI AVAILABLE: JUNE

In Konami's new changeling Action RPG, *Azure Life*, you are born into the game anew each time you play and no two games are alike. Sega introduced the metamorphosing RPG first with 91's *Fatal labyrinth*, then Chun Soft (for Enix) perfected it in *Mystery Dungeon 2* (a now sought after Super Famicom title) and more recently Square commissioned Chun Soft for the Japanese hit (starring everyone's favorite giant yellow chicken) *Chocobo Mystery Dungeon*. Designing a game in such a way is a double edged sword. On the one hand no matter how many times you play the game it is in a constant state of mutation; infinite replayability, but drawing from the same set of tiles throughout; limiting graphical boundaries. A monster making feature allows the player to play a little Frankenstein in the midst of live action dungeon clearing. We'll have more on *ALOD* next month.



BATMAN & ROBIN

DEVELOPER: PROBE PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM AVAILABLE: JUNE

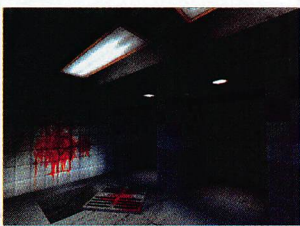
In one of the most ambitious adventure games ever attempted, Probe hopes to combine real time action and role playing like never before. Problematic thus far however are Batman's sluggish feel (he feels like a slow car) his problematic jumping and moving up stairs (which is more akin to floating than actual stepping), and the fact that the Batmobile (which is modeled beautifully) is too big for the environments. You can't help but smash into every single structure, trash-can, lamp-post and pedestrian that Gotham has to offer. In the plus column is the game's engine which seems up to the task, and the graphics which look great taking into account the immense proportions of the environments. If the gameplay bugs can be worked out, *Batman and Robin* could make up for one tank of a movie and dethrone the king of all Batman games, Konami's *Batman the Animated Series*.



BLOOD 2

DEVELOPER: GT INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98

A sequel to the gruesome (yet highly engrossing, fun and with numerous in-jokes and even a hidden Lara Croft!), horror-themed corridor game of last year, *Blood 2* thrusts Caleb into the year 2030. Space permits but a severely truncated summary of the story: Basically, an elder god has slipped into our dimension causing people to mutate and fall under the spell of mind controlling parasites. One of the Chosen must become the 17th incarnation of Tchernobog and seal the dimensional rift to save the world. Befitting a sequel, enhancements abound. Several new weapons allow you to voodoo, dismember, burn, and generally kill more than ever before. Marvelous graphical enhancements include motion captured creatures, dynamic lighting and terrain mapping. Up to 32 players can compete over a network, a modem, or the internet, and you can be sure of plenty of outrageous one-liners!



COMMAND & CONQUER 2: TIBERIAN SUN

DEVELOPER: WESTWOOD PUBLISHER: WESTWOOD AVAILABLE: FALL '98

Command and Conquer, the "King of all Real-Time Strategy Games" has a sequel. *Command and Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun* is almost here, and it looks better than we ever imagined. C&C2 will feature an overhauled graphics engine that will display its brilliance in true 16-bit color. Rather than sticking with the monotonous overhead view, C&C2 will boast an isometric view that will show off what has been dubbed "variable 3D terrain." This amounts to landscapes that alter under certain conditions (rivers freeze, many objects can be destroyed) which in turn adds a new dimension to the already bottomless gameplay. C&C2 will also feature colored lighting, and a revolutionary rendering method using what are called "voxels." Each pixel is dimensioned by width, height, and length that amounts to flawless animation. I don't think we need to stress the impact this one is going to have.



DAIKATANA

DEVELOPER: ION STORM PUBLISHER: EIDOS AVAILABLE: TBA

John Romero once again attempts to work his magic and re-invent the first-person corridor game with his latest, *Daikatana*. Featuring a plot thick with time travel, you'll encounter four unique historical periods in your quest to put history back into its proper perspective. You'll begin in Kyoto, Japan in the year 2455, and through several plot machinations, end up in ancient Greece circa 1200 BC, then the Dark Ages, 560 AD, and finally, back to the future in 2030 San Francisco. This time hopping permits many different styles of location and creatures to be encountered. There are supposedly some 74 unique monsters to be found in the game, with a total of 24 different weapons spread through out the time periods. Only time will tell if this game can re-create the following of Romero's previous outings and ensure a long, and fruitful life for Ion Storm...



DEAD BALL ZONE

DEVELOPER: RAGE SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: SPRING '98

Here's a new one. A future world torn apart by anarchy and confusion finds itself taken up in all new sport of unprecedented brutality. The so-called Dead Ball Zone is just such a sport, a combination of football, soccer, and hockey. With two teams of eight players, the object of the game is to get the ball into the opponent's goal. Novel. Each player will have up to twenty moves on hand including throwing, catching and shooting. Opponent team members can even be taken out with bombs, chainsaws and guns. Apparently simple to learn but hard to master, *Dead Ball* zips its way onto the PS this Spring. Even by the screenshot below, you'll instantly see what's in store for you; an enhanced combination of *Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe* and *Brutal Sports Football* with extra weaponry and more players. Only one problem; the word 'brutal' doesn't appear in the title...



DESCENT FREESPACE

DEVELOPER: PARALLAX VOLUTION PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY AVAILABLE: SPRING '98

From the purveyors of the gut-wrenching (and distinctly gray) *Descent* series comes a title that features tight zero-gravity physics and the most massive intergalactic dreadnoughts ever to exist in a real-time 3D environment, *Descent Freespace: The Great War*. *DF* features a deep story depicting a wavering struggle for peace between two colliding factions (the Terrans and the Vasudans) disrupted by the sudden appearance of a supreme hostile alien race, the Shivans. The experience is indigenous to the *Wing Commander Series*, yet the graphics, AI and magnificently designed space vessels push *DF* well into uncharted galaxies... within the realm of interstellar combat that is. From our quick romp through the *Freespace* universe, it became clear that the future of galactic combat is very, very... gray. We hope some sort of lighting effects will alleviate this graphical shortcoming, however.



DOMINION

DEVELOPER: ION STORM PUBLISHER: EIDOS AVAILABLE: TBA

No Tank Police in sight, but there are, however, the complete trappings of an isometric futuristic real-time strategy. This includes the ethereal and arousing female announcer ("construction complete!"), a set of buildings assembled around a central complex, followed by 'refineries' constructed over liquid ore and a set of opposing forces (from differing races) all vying for the same portion of futuristic terrain. Think C&C in the far future with huge stomping mechs, massive maps and a few gameplay problems and you've summed up *Dominion* rather nicely. With the veritable tidal wave of games from this emerging genre, the unbalanced gameplay (turrets are far too powerful) and the lack of graphical prowess (huge stomping mechs firing piddling little bullets, and rather barren topography) could prove to be a major stumbling block. We hope for improvements...



DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL

DEVELOPER: N-SPACE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98

"Hail to Lara Croft, baby!" Yes, Duke is back, facing the same aliens he disgraced in his first adventure, but this time, instead of the action defaulting to the usual first-person perspective, PlayStation gamers will be fortunate to see all of Mr Nukem, thanks to the third person perspective and trailing camera angles. Now with the history-altering power of time travel at their command, the aliens are attacking the human race all throughout time. Duke will travel through the Old West, Roman and Medieval Times, and modern day in his continuing quest to cull aliens, with weapons and environments will change accordingly with each time period. This latest Duke will also feature more background interaction and levels that are said to be larger than *Tomb Raider's*. With 512x240 resolution and dynamic lighting, this Duke could prove to be a hit on PS.



ELEMENTAL GEARBOLT

DEVELOPER: SONY PUBLISHER: WORKING DESIGNS AVAILABLE: SUMMER '98

The flawed gun game, Sony's *Project: Horned Owl* was a bitter disappointment to many, more a throwback to the days of *Steel Gunner* than the state-of-the-art of *Time Crisis*. It would seem the *Horned Owl* team would like to redeem themselves with their latest, *Elemental Gearbolt*. Reportedly receiving a pumped up difficulty level, the game should nonetheless arrive stateside with its epic music, smooth graphics and interesting look intact. Whether this difficulty will upset the game's balance has yet to be seen, but *Elemental Gearbolt* will unquestionably remain superior to *Horned Owl*, despite utilizing the similar 2D cardboard cut-out enemies; with the game resembling *Area 51*, but with a distinctly fantastic setting. Shooter fans be on the look out, but it remains to be seen if gamers weaned on a diet of blasting black-suited criminals can make the change to a world of myth.



INVASION FROM BEYOND

DEVELOPER: GT INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: SUMMER '98

Drawing inspiration from the wonderful sci-fi B-movies of the 1950s (we're talking Ed Wood's *Plan Nine from Outer Space* here, and if that's not a reason to recommend a title, then I resign my MST30K membership now!), GTI's *Invasion From Beyond* puts an appealing face on the 3D shooter genre. In true form, the cheesy story is played out in full motion cut scenes with some of the worst acting this side of a Joe Don Baker film. As luck would have it, it's up to you to stop an alien invasion of Earth in your "specially equipped" spacecraft. You'll take on alien flying saucers across more than 30 crazy mixed up missions with wonderful 3D graphics flying in your face. There are even some strategy elements thrown into its arcade style play, *IFB* looks like a rather entertaining and off-the-wall release. We'll formally review it as soon as possible.



L.A.P.D. 2100 A.D.

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS AVAILABLE: FALL '98

L.A.P.D. 2100 A.D. takes you into the 22nd century as a futuristic cop out to bust some high stakes criminal gangs. It seems they've taken control of territory in the world's major cities and it's going to take some massive firepower to bring them down. Obviously, some huge bomb that can take out the whole of the West Coast must be in their possession... Armed to the teeth in your neo-assault vehicle, you've got something of a fighting chance. For you see, you're at the controls of no ordinary attack craft; this thing can transform from a powerful walker to an agile hovercraft and according to the press release, has a "bad attitude". Let's hope that's a real cool ED209 growl and the ability to napalm entire blocks without your command, and not some cheesy *Team Knight Rider* scripting. I guess we'll find out exactly what that means when *L.A.P.D.* debuts this the fall.



LODE RUNNER 2

DEVELOPER: PRESAGE SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: AUGUST

Become a "Runner" again with events this time transpiring in a new isometric 3D world. Collect gold and solve puzzles as you explore vast levels filled with baffling situations and hazards. This time around *Lode Runner* enters the new age with full multiplayer support including seven modes dedicated to LAN and Internet gameplay, and over 75 levels to conquer. There's also a level constructor for users where one can edit pre-existing levels or create new, devious maps of your own. It should be running technically sound as developers Presage Software have implemented a gorgeous 16-bit graphics engine and immersive 16-bit sound using the Qsound technology. This second installment in the *Lode Runner* series should prove to be a refreshing change from the deluge of first-person shooters and real-time strategy fests that have stormed the market recently.



LUNAR SSS

DEVELOPER: GAME ARTS PUBLISHER: WORKING DESIGNS AVAILABLE: TRA

Originally released on the Sega CD, *Lunar: The Silver Star* quickly became a favorite among RPG fans, but failed to reach the stardom *Final Fantasy* games experienced thanks to the system it was created for. Now, years later, Lunar is back, with a slightly changed name and a tremendously updated storyline and engine. Originally created for the Saturn in 1996, *Lunar: Silver Star Story* featured completely redrawn graphics, tons of animation, cool storyline twists (which make it almost a totally different game) and all new music. Working Designs (who brought over the two Sega CD *Lunars*) originally had planned to release the Saturn version here last year, but cancelled it and moved their translation work to the newly announced PlayStation Lunar. This way, the blossoming RPG PS crowd can truly appreciate the gorgeous depth and beauty of this hand-drawn masterpiece.



MAX 2

DEVELOPER: INTERPLAY PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY AVAILABLE: MAY '98

Due out this month, Interplay Production's 'more story-oriented' sequel to *M.A.X. (Mechanized Attack and eXploration)*, *M.A.X. 2*, will boast a multitude of innovative features over alternate real-time strategy games including a graphics engine that allows the player to scale in and out and change the viewing angle of the rendered battlefield in real-time. Tailoring to all strategy fans, *M.A.X.2* will feature three modes of play: real-time, simultaneous turn-based, or classic turn-based. Play of the campaign variation will include a total of 60 missions spread over four campaigns. The latest version we received shows much potential, but when things heated up, *M.A.X.2*'s engine cooled off. Hopefully it will be tweaked before the final release, as this title will certainly have enough competition to worry about thanks to the invasion of tiny tanks of various real-time strategy guises.



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

DEVELOPER: INFOGAMES PUBLISHER: OCEAN AVAILABLE: JUNE

Mission Impossible is finally set to appear this summer, after almost a year's worth of tweaking. Ocean has been going back through levels adding entirely new gameplay features to coincide with the spy theme. The developers have admitted to using both *Mario 64* and *Goldeneye* as inspiration for *MI*'s design. In any case, their game has definitely seen improvement since the last time we saw it, but will it be enough to contend with *Goldeneye*? The engine is still quite slow, the camera angles tend to be difficult to take advantage of, and the control and collision are often questionable. Compared to Rare's stuff, or Nintendo's in-house projects, *Mission Impossible* looks first generation. Good level design and interesting mission choices may compensate for this. We shall see.



MOTO RACER 2

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS AVAILABLE: TBA

Delphine's original *Moto Racer* for PC received quite a lot of attention for its excellent graphics and deep gameplay, especially as there's not that many Motocross games available of any reasonable quality. Now, the much anticipated sequel is on its way this fall and as expected, everything's been suitably upgraded. There will be around 40 tracks to choose from with a built-in track editor allowing for the creation of custom courses (a fantastic option, allowing many a sleepless night perfecting your own raceways to tear around). New multi-player modes include one-on-one and team races across a network or the internet. The graphics are reportedly being enhanced and now feature support for AGP boards and increased 3D acceleration, although the game isn't likely to be blessed with the kind of lighting *Forsaken* enjoys. A PS version is scheduled to follow.



N2O

DEVELOPER: GREMLIN PUBLISHER: FOX INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98

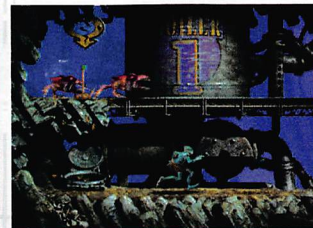
Despite the fact that last year's ECTS show detailing European software has a total absence of stunning software, a few gems were still able to be plucked from the Cubic Zirconias, specifically from the Gremlin booth. Like *Nanotek Warrior* before it, Fox Interactive's *N2O* attempts to capture the mad, addictive flavor of the stripped down shooter classic *Tempest*. Developed by Gremlin's master coders, *N2O* is set to blaze along at 60 fps with all manner of lighting and warping effects transforming the tunnel before you. Featuring a vast array of insect inspired enemies and an excellent selection of weapons, Gremlin is hoping to inject some variety into the white knuckle territory. Music is also of great importance (especially for a game of this nature), and Fox is reportedly in talks with some "big" electronic acts in hopes of scoring some legit beats for the action. Stay tuned.



ODD WORLD 2: ABE'S EXODUS

DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD INHABITANTS PUBLISHER: GT MT. AVAILABLE: FALL '98

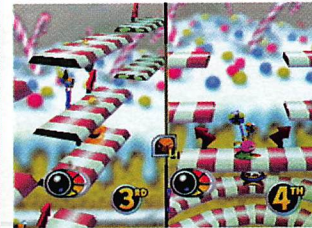
The sequel to one of 1997's most acclaimed titles, *Abe's Odyssey*, is well into production. *Abe's Exodus* follows the unlucky little fellow immediately after the victory celebration of the first game, when he inadvertently falls on his melon. Three strange Mudokan spirits appear in a vision, and beg for Abe's assistance. It seems as though the Glukkons have desecrated the ancient Mudokan burial city of Necrum, in order to mine the remains for bones that are used as the main ingredient in the popular soft-drink known as "SoulStorm Brew". Also, the super-secret ingredient of the Brew is Mudokan tears, so many are still enslaved. It's up to Abe to satisfy the Spirits and end the injustice being brought upon his brethren. Expect a harder-edged *Abe* this time around, as well as many more cool attacks and "possessions", using the same beautifully-rendered engine.



RECKIN' BALLS

DEVELOPER: IGUANA PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM AVAILABLE: MAY

Iguana's at the helm of *Reckin' Balls* and as one might imagine they've managed to conjure up something not only completely unique, but addicting, easy to grasp, and highly replayable as well. Picture a vertical roller coaster that you can glide or grapple up. Except... it's in sections that move vertically and horizontally, you can only grapple certain sectors of track, there are danger zones and launching pads everywhere, both CPU and/or human opponents threaten your very existence, and an assortment of power-ups can transform you or your enemy into a killing machine or worse. While all of this vertical mayhem is taking place take a moment to admire the inspired particle effects, 3D backdrops, (in lieu of the standard flat painting) and fluid animation. Personally, I'd like to see a more fiendish assortment of balls rather than the abundance of cute ones I've seen so far.



RETURN FIRE 2

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: MGM INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98



The original *Return Fire* received accolades for being a fun little action/strategy game with an awesome classical score (anyone who remembers scooting off in a military jeep to *The Flight of the Bumblebee* should agree to that). The inevitable sequel is on its way to both PS and PC with a bevy of enhancements in store for the *Return Fire* faithful. PC players will get a four player split screen and 16 player support over a LAN, modem, or the internet with Mplayer and PS owners will have to make do with a two player split screen. For control, the PC will support force feedback joysticks and numerous 3D cards, while on the PS front, support for the Dual Shock analog will be implemented. Both versions are due in the fall, but the question remains as to what the musical score will be. We'd personally like some Grieg or Shubert, but we'll settle for one of Carl Orff's Operatic masterpieces instead.



ROGUE TRIP

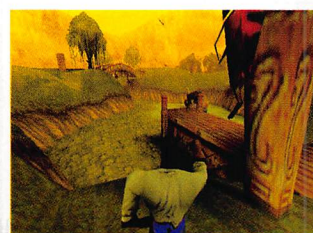
DEVELOPER: SINGLE TRAC PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98



Single Trac established themselves as the masters of the genre with *Twisted Metal 2*, but with *Rogue Trip* they've taken it to a new level. You're an Automercenary. In the future, the world is terribly overcrowded and vacations have become a hot commodity. They're so important, in fact, that only the wealthiest aristocrats can afford them. The middle-class, however, dream of such a vacation and they'll risk it all just to get a glimpse. It's up to you and your bizarrely armed attack vehicle to safely transport tourists into these havens, avoiding numerous security outfits along the way. If you can stop at designated "Photo Ops" long enough for your passenger to snap a quick picture, that part of the mission is accomplished. What a cool premise! Naturally, the star of the show will be intense graphic presentation and potential for destruction, so we'll have to wait and see.

SHADOWMAN

DEVELOPER: IGUANA UK PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM AVAILABLE: FALL '98



Shadowman, being developed for PC and N64 by Iguana UK, follows in the footsteps of *Turok*, as a game being developed directly from an Acclaim-created comic series. Shadowman puts you in the role of Michael LeRoy, a college student out for revenge. LeRoy only goal is to avenge the death of his brother who was gunned down by a serial killer. LeRoy learns voodoo powers and is able to pass through the world of the dead via his dead brother's teddy bear (hmmm... crazy comic writers, eh?). LeRoy must use his voodoo powers along with weapons he picks up to hunt down a trail of serial killers which will eventually lead to his brother's killer. We were able to play a very early version of the PC version of Shadowman on a recent trip to Acclaim and the game shows enormous potential. We'll keep you posted in future issues with updates as this game develops.

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

DEVELOPER: TREASURE PUBLISHER: WORKING DESIGNS AVAILABLE: TBA



Here's proof their is a god (or deity of your choosing). If you would have asked us a year ago what the odds were of a Treasure 2D power title coming to the PlayStation we would have said about the same as a Jaguar version of *FF7*. Well, we're glad you didn't ask, because *Silhouette Mirage*, one of the all time highest powered 2D games from renowned programming gods Treasure is about to hit the U.S. PlayStation. Who would be so cool as to bestow this glorious work on us? Working Designs of course. The purveyors of Japanese software are now in the Sony camp, and they're choosing their port-overs wisely! Prepare for genius gameplay and epic boss encounters accompanied by some of the greatest game music ever recorded. The PS version even has an extra boss not found in the Japanese Saturn version! Can the PS pull it off? Stay tuned for quite a bit more coverage on SM in the coming months.

SMALL SOLDIERS

DEVELOPER: DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER: EA AVAILABLE: FALL '98



Dreamworks is still working hard to produce a good game (*Lost World* failed all but our lowest expectations), but hopefully *Small Soldiers* will turn things around for them providing they implement absorbing gameplay. Surprise, surprise, this game is also based on a film, and this one is again of the same name. In fact, the film shows enormous promise, simply for the fact that it's the only real threat to unseat the forthcoming *Godzilla* movie, and Phil Hartman may voice some of the characters as he appears in the film). You'll get control toy soldiers as you direct attacks, deploy troops and set up nasty little traps in a miniscule environment. There are a total of fifteen levels of gameplay and twelve unique environments with all manner of cool digital effects. It's coming this fall for PlayStation, and we're hoping for some humorous touches, such as 'marine' style grunting...

SPACE CIRCUS

DEVELOPER: INFROGAMES PUBLISHER: OCEAN AVAILABLE: FALL '98



Games like *Space Circus* are the best reason to own a PC with a 3D accelerator. Infogrames has attempted to create a true, interactive cartoon. Sure, that tag-line has been said many times before, but usually it described lame 2D games carrying a 'toon license. This time it's being attempted in true 3D. Having played *Space Circus* first-hand, we can report that it is easily one of the best-looking 3D platformers on the PC, right up there with the likes of *Tonic Trouble*. There's seven huge universes to explore within the *Space Circus*, extremely non-linear gameplay, and hilarious puzzle elements. Over 300 insane characters create a cartoon-like atmosphere, and each are blessed with unique AI thanks to an advanced behavior engine. Keep your eye on this one.

TIDES OF WAR

DEVELOPER: DEVIL'S THUMB PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: JUNE

Avast, ye mateys, *Tides of War* is coming to a PC screen near you. Described as a mission-based sailing ship combat/exploration game (a rather natty title, don't you think?), *ToW* features over fifty unique ships, and a world more than 60,000 screens large. With over 60 missions that run the gamut from exploration, combat, search and destroy, and escorting, variety should be of little concern. Beginning the game in a small "sloop" or "brig", you'll eventually be able to work your way up to a 120 gun floating death machine. For added strategy, you'll have the ability to "micro-manage" your ship and its crew, rationing out food and discipline. Keep morale high or the crew will mutiny. With realistic wind/sail physics and total freedom to explore the massive world, *ToW* just might capture a following; it certainly doesn't have much in the way of competition to halt it from making a (wait for it) big splash...



TOMORROW NEVER DIES

DEVELOPER: BLACK OPS PUBLISHER: MGM INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: MAY

As work nears completion on Black Ops' first Bond translation, there's still very little to be garnered from the game itself, save for the fact that there's three distinct graphical engines, and there's Pierce in it. Wisely grabbing the license of *Tomorrow Never Dies* before Rare and Nintendo could churn out a sequel to *Goldeneye* and make truckloads of cash, MGM, Danjaq Inc., Mac B, Eon Productions and Black Ops have all combined in a great task; to provide PlayStation owners with a Bond experience as intense and playable as the one Rare offered. At least, that's what we're hoping for; this had better not be the video game equivalent of *Never Say Never Again*... Expect *Goldeneye*-style environments, along with a racing section, and even some skiing portions as Black Ops try to cram in as much Bond atmosphere as is possible. At least you know the music's going to be better...



TRANS AM RACING

DEVELOPER: EAI PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: FALL '98

Continuing the kitschy retro-trend, GTI's new racing game from developers EAI recreates 1968-1972 Trans Am Racing with an actual license from the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America). Featuring meticulously recreated courses, many of which have never before been seen in a simulation, TAR attempts to give players the thrill of one of North America's premier racing events. Cars include such classics as the '66 Dodge Dart, '68 Chevrolet Camaro, '70 Boss Mustang FB, '70 Pontiac Firebird and '72 AMC Javelin. The game's developer, EAI, has promised an exceedingly realistic and thrilling game experience. This should come as no surprise considering their past experience in producing realistic auto accident recreations for use in litigation. Expect incredibly realistic physics and cutting edge 3D graphics. And hopefully, some rather groovy retro characters and tunes to tap your feet to.



UNHOLY WAR

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS AVAILABLE: OCTOBER

Crystal have been up late thinking about niche markets previously unexplored, and have decided that *Unholy War* is to fill one of these holes. The new sub-genre? A cross-breed of the real-time battle with a one-on-one fighting game and *Final Fantasy Tactics*. The result? The *Pandemonium* development crew setting out to create many differing fantasy entities, such as lizard-skinned men, huge slug-like behemoths and charging dinosaurs from different warring factions. Summoning the appropriate champion, you move them around until they confront each other FFT-style, then the action switches to a fighting arena where spells and melee can be experienced. An interesting twist is that the Japanese version of the game won't be using the fantasy theme. Thanks to an agreement with Bandai, import owners can control *Sailor Moon* cast members instead!



URBAN ASSAULT

DEVELOPER: TEAM ANDROMEDA PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT AVAILABLE: TBA

Microsoft's *Urban Assault*, originally dubbed *Anarchy*, is another recent attempt at melding the ever-growing real-time strategy genre with the always-popular first-person action style game. Taking place in the distant future, you are fused with a military 'station' and required to deploy various units into heated urban battlefields to save the Earth. For the most part, the smooth graphics engine, wide variety of units, dazzling visual effects, and explosive sounds all provide an authentic experience of being in the thick of a heated urban battlefield, but the game in its current state is lacking in both control and interface areas. From a comprehensive playtest and evaluation, we found that the game in this current state needs some fine-tuning. With the correct tweaking however, this could be as enjoyable as a two player battle of *Tokyo Wars*, but with masses more strategy...



WAR OF THE WORLDS

DEVELOPER: GT INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE AVAILABLE: SUMMER '98

GT Interactive celebrates the 100th anniversary of *War of the Worlds* with what should be an exciting real-time combat strategy game. Based-on the classic H.G. Wells novel and the best-selling album by Jeff Wayne, GTI are attempting to implement rich evocative storylines and involving non-linear gameplay into an original strategy game. There will be no pre-set missions; all gameplay is orchestrated by the player, including control of resources and placement of all forces; in land, air, and sea-based environments. Also, players will be able to control either the abundant Human armies or the more technically advanced Martian forces, allowing for a *Starcraft*/C&C-esque variety in gameplay. Although we have yet to witness the graphic power of *WOTW*, GTI claim to have everything from lighting, terrain mapping, and particle effects well under control...



The *Tekken* trio represents not only a substantial cash cow for a company who started their exploits in the 1950s with mechanical donkey riding, but also marks the most successful serious beat-'em-up ever to grace arcades in the last four years (notice I wrote serious, *Mortal Kombat* fanatics). After Namco's moderately successful *Tekken*, and just as the popularity of the *Virtua Fighter* series was fading from the interest of most American gamers (a fact which has puzzled many a video game journalist), Namco tried to entice the arcade frequenters again with a sequel to the first Iron Fist tournament which promised more of everything. The terms



The Rave War is back! Are you ready for the fight?

An outstanding conversion breaks all the rules! Namco have some serious power...

TEKKEN 3

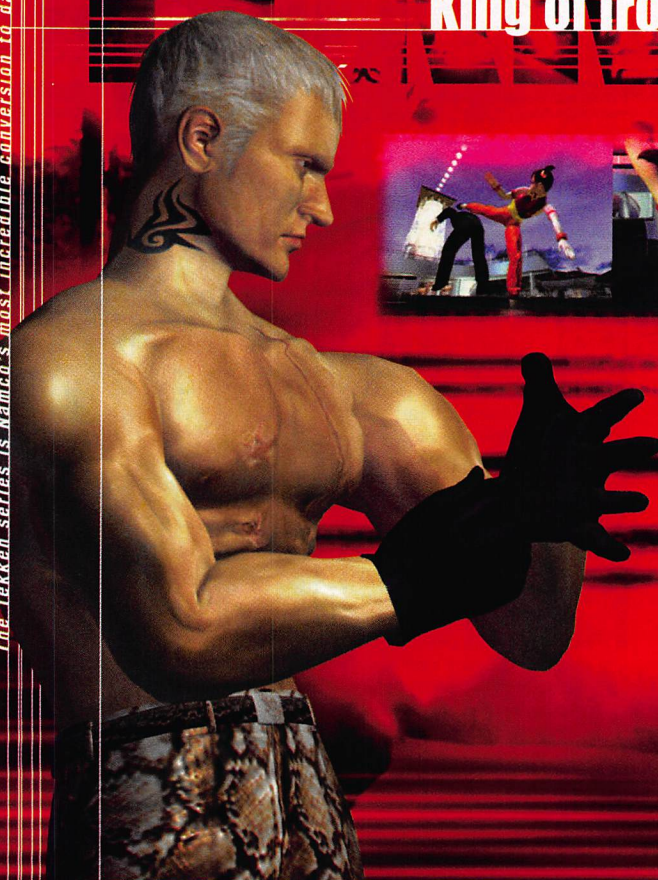
King of Iron Fist Tournament

by: David Hodgson



There's a number of hints in the introductions and endings of *Tekken 3* to ensure the longevity of the series with another sequel that's sure to be in the works (but where's the Namco CG movie, huh? Imagine 90 minutes of rendered *Tekken* characters!). So what's in there to summon your excitement for *Tekken 4*? References to Kazuya (he's the guy in the back of the car in the intro, and the endings for both Eddy and Hwoarang).

The *Tekken* series is Namco's most incredible conversion to date!



"exact PlayStation conversion" and "extremely deep gameplay" were banded about, and despite a game which, at least superficially, looked to be a veritable mimic of Yu Suzuki's masterpieces (and superior visuals from the *Virtua Fighter* camp), *Tekken 2* won the U.S. dual outright, boasting a more interesting and downright cooler selection of characters and slightly more accommodating gameplay. Of course, one of the main reasons behind the fact that the name Heihachi is now uttered with the same reverence as Ryu and Ken was the almost perfect PlayStation versions of the *Tekken* series which followed soon after.

However, Namco were presented with an unprecedented problem for their latest arcade-to-home translation, in the shape of fitting a game using System 12 hardware (and great chunks of on-board RAM) into the PlayStation; essentially a downgraded System 11 board with 2 megs of RAM, a feat akin to squeezing a watermelon into a peanut shell. Previous attempts had succeeded simply because *Tekken 1* and *2* were



An almost exact port-over! The finest PlayStation fighter of all time...

developed on the System 11 board, but this time something had to give. Thankfully, PlayStation owners can rest assured that the differences are minimal and don't affect the gameplay at all... but are noticeable all the same. Firstly, the backgrounds are 2D panoramas (just like the *Tekken* before) and not the 3D *Virtua Fighter 2* style backdrops of the arcade; thus removing a sizable chunk of polygon shifting. Secondly, the characters themselves are ever-so slightly chunkier and angular than the arcade. Texture mapping makes up for this, but slightly pointed torsos and stumper hands (not to mention previously separate fingers are now joined in some characters) are the order of the day for *Tekken 3*'s fighters. Thirdly, the variety of hit explosions (from the purple mist of blocking to the trails of sparks generated by a power attack) lack the precise detail of their arcade cousins; leading to slight pixelization occurring which is especially noticeable in the close-up camera zooms.

Fourthly, missing frames of animation (which is hardly noticeable unless you've played the arcade version to death) means there's minute timing differences with some complex combination attacks, and some throws (such as Forest Law's Dragon's Fire)

have a minuscule amount of polygon break-up. Of course, when all is said and done, this is a fantastic conversion of an arcade masterpiece and well deserves to be in your collection, and these variations are noted merely to provide you with detailed descriptions of differences between the two versions of the game.

What the PlayStation version of *Tekken 3* has in abundance is a wider variety of play modes, stunning rendered introductions and endings for all the characters and the usual array of PlayStation-only features, modes and characters designed to attract the console gamer rather than the arcade freak. And in order to attract the millions of *Tekken 2* buyers to the third Rave War, Namco spent some extra time crafting numerous additional touches, not to mention new characters and a whole host of extra moves. The camera twists and zooms up on particularly impressive throws and power attacks, there's more grapple and attack reversals, sidestepping is back for every combatant, characters can rise from the ground almost immediately, and the general game mechanics have been tweaked to the point of *Tekken* perfection. There's nothing close to this level of intense fighting on the PlayStation; every character has 35 or more methods of foe disposal, and some (such as Eddy Gordo) have well over one hundred! Learning the best moves from a fighter's repertoire (hence our pull-out mini-guide) is the key to success in the third Iron Fist contest, and the extra parrying, feinting, sidestepping and general additional melee is well worth the admission price alone.

Character-wise, the new batch of contestants serve the *Tekken* cause extremely well, being well-rounded, and Eddy Gordo even introduces a newly accepted martial art into play; the sweeping Capoeira of a Brazilian demon! Despite the lack of stages (there's no individual level backdrops for the majority of the hidden characters), the constant 60 frames-per-second still astounds, the many extra sub-games amazes (check our supplement for full details), and special mention must be made of the musical score; Namco are back on the techno trail after the somewhat disappointing *Rage Racer* tunes with almost 30 hard dance tracks crammed into one shiny CD. All this is wrapped up into one eminently playable package; meaning those owning previous *Tekken*s as well as newbies can enjoy the extremely polished show. So just how well did *Tekken 3* score? Turn to our reviews section to find out more, but for the moment, prepare to spend some time with a real martial artist; the man responsible for Eddy Gordo's motion capture...

More Tekken 3 coverage in our free supplement...





Secrets about the Art of Fighting from the real-life Eddy Gordo

CAPOEIRA MAGIC!

The first 3D fighting realization of a lavish and spectacular Brazilian martial art required the not inconsiderable talents of Capoeira

mestre Marcelo Pereira for all Eddy Gordo's motion capture. What follows is a brief history of this fighting technique, along with

level begins and the graduations for this take place only every five to ten years. The progression includes; green and white; yellow and white; blue and white; and finally, white.

GR: Do any of the members of the famous Capoeira "Jiu-Jitsu" family from Brazil practice Capoeira?

MP: I don't know if any of them practice Capoeira. However, Capoeiristas and Jiu-Jitsu fighters have been opponents in many matches of Vale tudo and other open tournaments. For that reason, I believe that from the fighting point of view, especially in preparation to the bouts, both styles have benefited from each other. However, the ritual aspect of Capoeira has recently been jeopardized due to a break in fluidity which ends in grappling matches that does not represent the tradition of the game.

GR: Capoeira seems to use a number of leg combination moves (kicks). How effective do you think Capoeira is compared to other martial arts?

MP: I believe and know that Capoeira is a very effective fight system in any contest.

GR: Capoeira's movements are very rhythmic. When you are facing an opponent using static moves such as in Karate, do you find it difficult to deal with these techniques or do you prefer a foe with fluidity in their movements?

MP: The ultimate high for a Capoeirista is to feel the fluidity in a game with another skillful Capoeirista. Other martial arts are so different from Capoeira that any match will not have the same feeling or flow.

GR: Is there any attack just using your upper body (fist, elbow, head, open-hand)?

MP: Capoeira has many upper body attack resources and also has wrestling techniques that are not supposed to be used frequently in a Capoeira game, but are instead strong hidden weapons for unique situations.

GR: Hypothetically, when you face a different martial artist, how do you react (when facing a Kickboxer, Karate practitioner or Jiu-Jitsu user)?

MP: Certainly not in the same way that I play a Capoeira game in the circle. Capoeira can be a very aggressive attack system and very effective in escapes, however, I would react by first trying to make peace with my opponent and avoiding the conflict.

GR: How did you first get involved with Namco and Tekken 3?

MP: I believe Namco heard of me through an international Capoeira seminar that I organized in San

Honored to be representing Capoeira in this new dimension...

Namco invited me to Japan for the motion capture process for Tekken 3.

Namco heard of me through an international Capoeira seminar that I organized in San Francisco. We are definitely seeing an increase in awareness of Capoeira in the U.S.

GR: Thanks for granting us this interview. Capoeira is honored to have been a means of self defense that was developed by Brazilian peasants, but was deemed for its extremely dangerous set of techniques. Please could you enlighten us on the history of the martial art?

MP: The history of Capoeira starts way back in the 15th century when the African slaves and their descendants in Brazil started to create the art. Once the art took form, it became a very dangerous weapon of self-defense and more than once Capoeira was forbidden by Brazilian federal amendments.

GR: What was the art of Capoeira originally intended for? Is it tribal, defense, sport or dance?

MP: By blending traditional dance with self-defense movements, Capoeiristas were able to camouflage the art which was really being developed for survival and also fun. However, it was only in the late 1930s that Capoeira was recognized as a national Brazilian sport. Today, it is the second most practiced sport in Brazil after Soccer. Around 30 million Brazilians practice Capoeira.

GR: Was Capoeira influenced by any particular martial art over the decades, and have you incorporated anything useful from these arts?

MP: I believe that martial arts from all over the world have contributed somewhat to one another, and this can be traced back centuries to a certain point in time, but it is impossible to prove when a technique was first used. The exception is Capoeira, which was developed in a new world that was very distant and isolated from Asian martial arts. For this reason, I don't think that Capoeira has directly borrowed any movements from other martial arts. I have created Capoeira moves, but I never took any other martial arts classes before. So, since all I have done is Capoeira, I consider those movements authentic Capoeira movements, and in fact, you cannot find such moves in other arts... yet.

GR: Do you believe Capoeira is a practical art for street self defense?

MP: I believe that of all the martial arts, Capoeira is one of the most practical and effective forms of street fighting in a real situation.

GR: Did you appear in the film "Only the Strong?"

MP: No, although all of the performers in that movie are good friends.

GR: Amen Sonto is a respected Capoeira mestre. Have you heard of him or trained with him?

MP: Amen is a good friend of mine, and we have performed and demonstrated Capoeira many times

Are you ready to enter the Tekken?

a host of other interesting tidbits of factual information to make your time with Eddy Gordo all the more gratifying, and a must for all those

seeking to cumulate their Capoeira knowledge. So, without further ado, let's meet Marcelo and find out more...

Francisco in 1995. In 1996, Namco requested a video tape of myself performing Capoeira. Then the following year, I was invited to fly to Japan for the motion capture. I was surprised and felt honored to be the person representing Capoeira in this new dimension. Like many other masters of the art, I have always been very concerned about Capoeira being misrepresented. For us, tradition is a treasure that expresses the roots of the art. Therefore, it reveals the truth, the spirit and the soul of a Capoeirista, bringing love, harmony, peace and understanding to us and our communities.

GR: How would you describe the mo-cap process?

MP: The motion capture process was a really fun project and very different from other things that I had done.

GR: Do you play other video games? Are you a fan of the Tekken series?

MP: I am not much of a video game player, but I am starting to play Tekken 3 in preparation for a deadly match between me and my six year old son, Juliano.

GR: Has your work with Tekken 3 increased the overall awareness of Capoeira?

MP: We are definitely seeing an increase in awareness of Capoeira in the U.S.

GR: Thank you for your time.

Gamers' Republic would like to extend their sincere and respectful thanks to Marcelo and his Capoeira troupe for granting us this interview. Thanks also to Jennifer Fitzsimmons at Namco for all her help.

You fancy yourself as the next Eddy Gordo, or simply want to learn more the coolest martial art of all time,



and the nearest Capoeira training center to you? Then write to:

Capoeira Mandinga,
P.O. Box 13502,
Berkeley, CA 94712-4502.

together, and we maintain close and frequent contact to ensure the positive growth of Capoeira in the U.S..

GR: Who was your Capoeira mestre?

MP: Mestre Suassuna is one of the most famous and respected masters in Brazil and I am proud to have been his student.

GR: Is its popularity more widespread than Jiu-jitsu in Brazil?

MP: A lot more, although Jiu-jitsu has a pretty big following there.

GR: Have you ever danced Capoeira at any clubs?

MP: I have demonstrated Capoeira many times at dance clubs.

GR: Was American "breakdancing" derived from Capoeira?

MP: It is a fact that street dancers in New York used to take Capoeira classes and incorporated many Capoeira movements into their dance form as Breakdancing was being created.

GR: At what age did you start training?

MP: I began training in the streets when I was 14. At the age of 16, I began training in a Capoeira academy.

GR: From your first initial attempt to practice Capoeira, how long did it take you to reach the level of expertise that you now possess?

MP: I am still learning Capoeira, but I felt comfortable with my Capoeira talents after three years of training.

GR: How long have you been studying Capoeira?

MP: Are you trying to guess my age?! Twenty-five years, more or less.

GR: Is there a ranking system in Capoeira (such as different colored belts?), and if so, how does it work?

MP: The most common ranking system in Capoeira is based on the colors of the Brazilian flag. At first, a beginner has no belt. The first belt is received at a graduation ceremony called a 'Batizado' (baptism). At the Batizado event, other students are promoted to higher levels. The Capoeira belts are shaped like a rope made of twisted or braided strands of yarn rather than a cloth sash. The progression of the colors is as follows; green; green and yellow; yellow; blue and yellow; blue; blue, yellow and green (graduated); blue, yellow, green, and white (teacher). After this, master

CAPOEIRA IS A VERY EFFECTIVE FIGHTING SYSTEM IN ANY CONTEST

PRATIQUE CAPOEIRA!!

THOSE WITH INTERNET ACCESS SHOULD JOIN THEIR BROWSERS TO <http://spazz.cchem.berkeley.edu/mandinga.htm>

Tradition reveals the truth, the spirit and the soul of a Capoeirista...

FIRST LOOK AT THE INCREDIBLE NEW 3D SHOOTING ACTION GAME FROM RITUAL

Deep in the heart of Texas, Ritual Entertainment is pairing the best of what technology has to offer with revolutionary gameplay. Their most recent release, Quake Mission Pack #1: Scourge of Armagon (under their original name, Hipnotic Entertainment), was well received by many and merited by Computer Gaming World as the "1997 Add-On of the Year". But even though it was great fun, Scourge will always be labeled as "just an add-on." However, Ritual's current project, Sin, is set to blow the walls off current gameplay standards. Gamers' Republic recently spent a day at Ritual's studio in Dallas, and what we saw, heard and played was not just stunningly impressive, but also reassuring that the future of 3D gaming is looking brighter than ever. This feature will take a detailed look at Ritual's upcoming revolutionary game and reveal why Sin is an important step forward for 3D gaming; a genre which has been plagued by minimal dramatics and dominated by the frag.

So what exactly makes Sin so special? Just about everything. Sin has by far the richest and most engrossing story ever to appear in a first-person perspective game (a third-person mode will also be available). The game is set in the near future and casts you into the role of John Blade, a member of a government sanctioned law enforcement agency named Hardcorps. Joe Selinski, Sin's project manager, details the intriguing plot: "Originally, we set the story about a hundred years in the future, but the way we were designing everything, it was too realistic. So instead of a hundred years, we made it about forty years in the future, more like 2037, mostly because the design and everything was sort of rooted in reality. We wanted to keep a certain kind of theme so we kind of adjusted things. But basically

SHOCKING ENVIRONMENTS

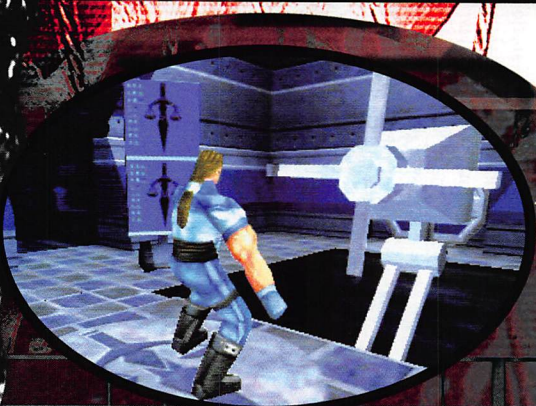


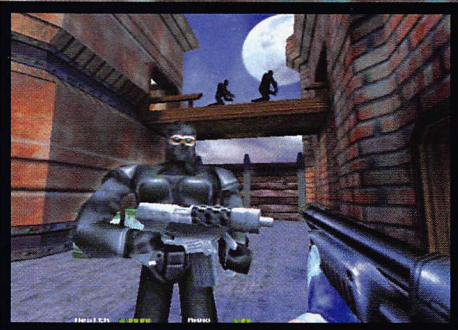
THE GROUNDBREAKING GAMEPLAY OF

SIN

BY DAVE REES

has by far the richest





what happens is that the government is becoming very ineffectual with regards to their police force. Crime is running rampant and it's just a hard time to control everything [a scary thought]. So what happens is the government decides, 'Okay, we can't do this, let's privatize this. Let's make some competition and let's go from there.' So these security forces come about, and one of the main ones is Hardcorps, which is actually run by Blade's uncle. And during the whole course, his Uncle gets killed and he takes over the company... But the main reason they are doing so well is that they still adhere to certain standards of honor, protection, and doing things the right way. These are the good guys. So they become one the biggest security forces for Freeport City. And in a

roundabout way, it's kind of like racketeering. What they do is, large corporations hire security forces to protect them. Just like paying for protection money, it's the same concept, just legalized. So that kind of sets up the background for Blade and Hardcorps. The way the game starts is you've been doing some other work and you find out that this bank is being robbed. And Freeport Federation Bank is one of your clients, so you're being called in to help them quell the problem they're encountering. And the main story leads into explaining how this mob boss that had been gone for awhile has surfaced again, and you actually thought that he was dead. But he's actually back and wreaking havoc for some unknown reason." As you progress through the game, this reason slowly fades into view; revealing a twisted plot that is far more elaborate than Resident Evil 2, and about as predictable as an X-Files episode.

A powerful story as such requires solid characters and that is exactly what Ritual has aimed for. A tremendous amount of



work went into perfecting Sin's personae. Early in the development process, Ritual routinely posted new character sketches on their web site with feedback forms regarding each character's abilities and attributes. Specific questions such as "What kind of attack should he have? What type of physical attributes? Fast? Slow? Should he travel alone, or in groups/squadrons? What kind of death sequence would you like to see?" were all part of the survey. The amount of feedback that they received was staggering and also a reality check that helped Ritual to properly balance the characters and story of Sin.

In Sin, you are not just a Marine or a Sorcerer on a mission to kill everything and find keys to unlock doors; you are John Blade, a well-built, highly-skilled security agent with thick dreadlocks and a serious attitude, and your objectives continually change as the story unfolds. You have a sidekick, JC, and there are other NPCs that you interact

with regularly. Mr. Selinski reveals Ritual's intentions: "What we really want to do is introduce really strong characters... because in some first-person games, it's all up to you to figure things out. And if you can't figure things out, you're kind of like; 'Well, what the hell do I do?'. So you go on the 'net and you find hints or whatever; or you just get frustrated and say, 'The hell with it'. So JC was kind of introduced to give you hints for the story. So as you play through the game, and you do certain things, it may not make sense to begin with, but then later on, he'll say; 'Hey remember back when you picked up that sample, we need it'. But even more prominent is your arch nemesis, an alluring dominatrix with an insatiable lust for sex and violence named Elexis Sinclair (think: Lara Croft gone very bad). Elexis is responsible for releasing a gene-altering drug named U4 onto the streets of Freeport, which is directly responsible for the city's accelerated crime rate. In a

-and most engrossing story yet..."

later level, you'll actually enter Elexis' house and gaze upon a collection of artistic testaments to her risqué hobbies (including pornographic paintings and a bobbing 'knob sculpture' right out of Clockwork Orange). Fans of Duke Nukem 3D should be happy to hear that none other than ex-3D Realms level designer Richard Grey (better known as 'Levelord') is the mapmaker behind Elexis' adult playpen as well as her xenomorphic laboratory where she performs gruesome human

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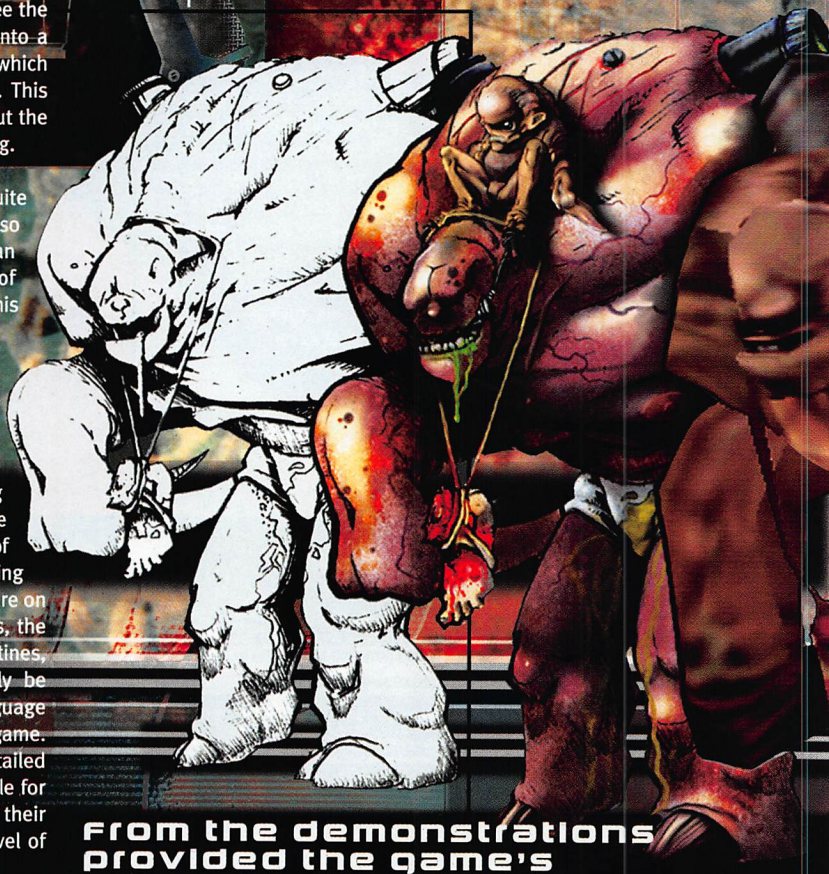
experiments. Expect plenty of interesting secrets and some not-so-subliminal messages.

Now to top all of this off, Sin's highly interactive gameplay is fueled by what Ritual dubs ABOs (Action Based Outcomes). As in real life, everything you do has a consequence. Your decisions affect your options and hence your options affect your decisions. The possibilities are vast, and consequently, the experience that each individual gamer enjoys when playing Sin will likely be unique. In fact it is possible to miss an entire episode based on your actions. Don MacAskill, a programmer working on Sin, describes a possible scenario: "We can't wait to hear stories from people who are say, playing in their office. Say a couple of people have been playing and over lunch one of 'em says; 'Oh man, did you see such and such level?' and the other guy is like; 'I beat the game, I didn't see that level!' so they run through and play the game again." For example, in one scene you will have the option of blowing a hole in the floor of a shower room. If you do, and the shower is turned on, water will leak through the hole. In the next level, you will see the hole you created on the ceiling, but the water is pouring onto a computer that was required to finish a secondary objective, which is now unattainable because the terminal has shorted out. This example is only one of a multitude of ABOs placed throughout the game, and as you can imagine, the possibilities are staggering.

The Q2 engine is awesome technology, but it was not quite flexible enough to handle what Ritual wanted to do with Sin, so they created their own enhancements. The result is an extremely powerful engine with a tremendous amount of flexibility; something that many developers only dream of. This flexibility was demonstrated to us in what will end up being a training level (similar in concept to "Lara's House" in the Tomb Raider series) complete with a skeet range and a tribute to "Hogan's Alley" for target practice. The demo revealed how players will be able to send various commands to a robot in a remote room. You can control the robot's arm, pick up crates and place them in various slots in a shelving unit (eventually, the room will be a weapon select area, but we were promised that the concept will be used in other stages of the game). What was most intriguing was the fact that everything transpired within the 3D world. The menu was actually a texture on a panel in front of you, and as you typed various commands, the display changed accordingly. To facilitate such complex routines, Sin's worlds and the objects that they contain can easily be manipulated and programmed through a robust scripting language (based on editable text files) developed specifically for the game. This in turn empowers the level designers to construct detailed scenarios and implement changes on the fly; surely invaluable for testing and tweaking. For those who enjoy creating maps of their own, Sin will ship with a map editor containing the same level of scripting.

Surely by now you are wondering what Sin looks and sounds like, what sort of weapons will be available, and the type of multi-player options it will have. Carefully navigate creaky wooden planks

spanning across crumbling buildings, chase a gigantic mutating boss through a subway station (complete with bums and aerosol art that would impress the most hard-core graffiti bombers), battle hammer wielding workers in a perfectly replicated working steel mill, cross a huge dam (even fans of Goldeneye will be shocked at the size), or scour a living science lab populated with semi-mutated human embryos and breathing walls that moan when shot... All gorgeously lit, all moving at Quake 2 frame rates, and all in true 16-bit color. Joe Selinski discusses Sin's diversity: "The designers from day one have always wanted to make a realistic game. We've given each level its own unique look, and that alone changes the game so much. You're not looking at the same texture set everywhere. We did specific texture sets for all the levels we were designing. When you go over to the abandoned building, it is messed up, there are bricks falling down... you go to the next level and it is a construction site so there's all this new stuff being put together. And then you go



From the demonstrations provided the game's environments were the most vivid and diverse we have ever seen, and each level has a unique look and feel.



to the next level and it is a subway, completely different." Some of the optical effects, such moving dust particles in the air, smooth undulating water and bioluminescent lighting seemed almost too realistic to be real-time.

Sin's final weapon list is still shrouded in mystery (many of the original weapon ideas have either changed or disappeared), but what we did manage to peek at was impressive. The Sniper will utilize a view-screen that will allow a player to zoom in on a target (a trend pioneered by Shiny's MDK and perfected by Rare in Goldeneye) and pick it off from afar. Another weapon fired a speedy projectile that produced an awesome shockwave effect upon impact. We also managed to get a glimpse of the Machinegun and Rocket Launcher, but they were also early. Regardless, Ritual reassured us that Sin's weapon rack will be the largest and most diverse when it is released.

For a good reason,

Sin's audio is not Redbook. To saturate the Sin experience with drama, Ritual devised an incredible digital sound engine that dynamically intensifies as your threat level rises, and subsides when as it lowers (something that has yet to be done with redbook). When exploring an area without any direct threats, the music is ambient and surreal. But when the action heat up, so does the music. Using audio to enhance mood and atmosphere of a game has been done before, but never as seamlessly as what was demonstrated to us. Even if the music was at its most intense level, it could drop to a whispering wind without sounding odd.

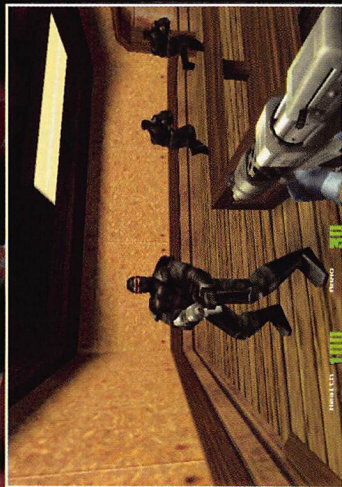
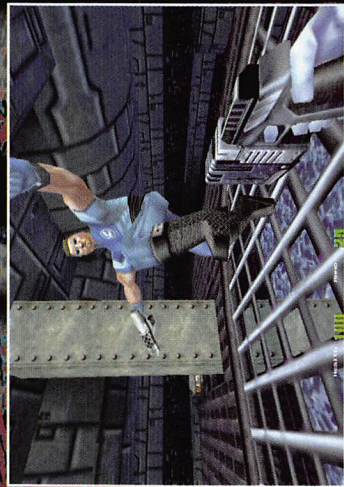
Easily the highlight of our visit was a quick dive into a game of Sin Deathmatch. Although we only had a chance to play one map (which was early), Quake 2 fans will be happy to know that Sin Deathmatch provides an equally intense experience, enhanced by more diverse weapons and distinct characters (you can play as John Blade, Elexis, or JC). Also, thanks to Sin's skeletal system for binding objects (see the following interview for details), we were able to see the weapons that other players were carrying (Quake 2 requires a patch called V-Weep for this same effect). I did have one complaint however: the frag count was mysteriously missing, perhaps to prevent any evidence of their own defeat!

It's obvious that Sin represents a turning point for 3D gaming. With technology now intact, development shops can focus their efforts more on level design, gameplay improvements, storyboarding, and innovative mechanics. Ritual already has, and Sin will likely be the game to beat when it hits later this Spring. When asked if they showed Sin to id, Joe Selinski replied "No, they haven't seen it, because they'll go crazy. We want to blow them away when they see it. Their jaws are gonna drop too." Ritual's next project (likely Sin 2) will use their upcoming super-charged engine, Uberengine, which is currently under development and will apparently shatter the current gameplay paradigm for 3D gaming. But until then, we're more than content with Sin.



HI POLY MODEL

AN interview with RITUAL



The Ritual "Tribe" was exactly what we expected. Approximately 20 cream-of-the-crop veteran coders, artists, level designers, and producers all highly motivated and dedicated to their work; all of them hard-core gamers. We spoke with three of Ritual's programmers (Mark Dochtermann, Jim Dosé, and Scott Alden) about their improvements and additions to the Q2 engine.

GR: What improvements can we expect to see in the engine?

Mark Dochtermann: *Sin* is based on the Quake 2 engine as you know and we wanted to basically use Q2 for its strengths and expand on what we thought could be improved upon. One of these things was developing a more robust camera system and the characters in *Sin* work in a hierarchical system where you can attach models to other models (known as a skeletal system). Like you can see your gun in Deathmatch or attach a hat to somebody. So right away we have a lot more expandability there. All of our models utilize different text files to different behaviors, different animations, the things that usually make programmers spend a lot of time on. Our system is very open and this allows people on the 'net for instance to easily make changes to monsters. And basically, when you merge that with the AI system, you can make creatures that have certain innate abilities just by changing a text file.

Jim Dosé: Plus the animation actually drives the movement of the character, so that means that you have very little skating because their feet are firmly planted on the ground. It makes doing things a lot easier.

Mark Dochtermann: Another thing that makes the game more interactive and more realistic is our surface system. Basically, it allows the level designers to tag certain surfaces in the world with surface attributes. We can define what kind of material the surface is made out of: stone, wood, concrete, flesh. There's just a whole lot of things that Quake 2 just didn't offer us that allows the game to be more realistic in the end.

Scott Alden: One of the main things I've been working on is increasing the interactivity of the environments. In Quake 1 and 2, you have simple button mashing where you push buttons in a certain order and things happen. What I've done is create a true 3D console in the game. So you walk up to a computer screen and activate it and you can actually type in commands. One of the examples is controlling a robot to go and grab something. It's added a new level of interactivity.

GR: Tell us a bit about *Sin*'s dynamic sound. What is it all about?

Mark Dochtermann: One thing that's always annoyed us about redbook is the limited amount of space that you have and the fact that you're stuck with pretty much one song per level. If you want to switch songs, you have to suffer that god-awful freeze. Who the hell knows what's wrong with CD-ROM manufacturers, but that problem exists. It's not in the code, it's probably not even in *Windows*. In any case, we wanted to counteract that. And we knew that *Sin* was going to be a big game with lots of dialogue, lots of creatures with large levels. So we would have been stuck with the reality of having only about 30 to 35 minutes of redbook audio and that isn't that great. You really couldn't create a custom feel for each level. So we abandoned redbook, even if it's the best quality. But quality isn't everything. There's aural quality and then there's also the quality of the



music. And we kind of felt that the quality of the music was more important than sound quality. And what we did in *Sin* is we have a music system that's based on streamed digital. Soon after shipping, we'll probably have an MP3 patch. But what we do in *Sin* is stream the music and it can be changed dynamically based on the mood of the game.

GR: Can you describe how the transitions between the different themes will work?

Mark Dochtermann: We use a digital crossfade so it'll be seamless. And what we're going to try and do is have several major moods per level. Uh, there's the normal song for that level, which plays while you're just sort of exploring or whatever and not currently fighting. And that's usually going to be the longest one. The next longest one will be the action theme, which plays when people are firing at you or you're firing at them or taking damage; whenever the general action level goes up. After that there's a suspense and a mystery mood. Suspense is when you go into an area and there are guys waiting for you in ambush. Mystery is kind of like a phonic clue for secrets that are in the game or when things are sort of unnatural, so objects in the world will influence the music system. When you get close to something that's a secret or it's something that you're supposed to notice, the music will change to reflect that to give you a clue. Songs can also cut in, like our surprise song. Say you're walking along and, I don't know, Homer Simpson jumps out or something and you want to just shock the player, immediately it hard cuts right to a song. You can get surprise that way.

GR: Much has been made about *Sin*'s additional lighting capabilities. Can you describe how it will enhance the game?

Mark Dochtermann: I think the reason you've heard a lot about *Sin*'s lighting is that 1); we had colored lighting before a lot of people, and 2); all of our environments are realistic. Plus, in something like *Quake 2*, which I think is just a beautiful game, it uses almost like the same kind of lighting everywhere. In *Sin*, we use different kinds of lighting depending on what we're trying to accomplish. Level designers have control over the shape of the light. It isn't just this globe of diffuse light that goes 360 degrees. We can control the aperture of the light and control a lot of its metrics that really make it look better in our opinion.

GR: You originally started *Sin* using the *Quake 1* engine. What was it like to convert it to *Quake 2*? Any problems?

Mark Dochtermann: We had a few rocky moments. We started designing *Sin* in mid-February and we started actually working on the project in April, so we're coming up on about a year of actually working on the project. At the time, *Q2* was going to be out in June or July of last year, and we knew that was going to slip some. But as it turns out, we didn't get the code until January 1st. That really skewed our timeline. We made a lot of advances with old *Quake*, but at the same time we couldn't do surface attributes, we couldn't do a lot of the things that we were relying on *Quake 2* for. And unfortunately, by December 15th of last year, we had every single map in the game essentially at the alpha stage. They weren't populated yet, but we had their geometry. Because of the *Q2* conversion, that delayed us until about three or four weeks ago [beginning of March 1998].

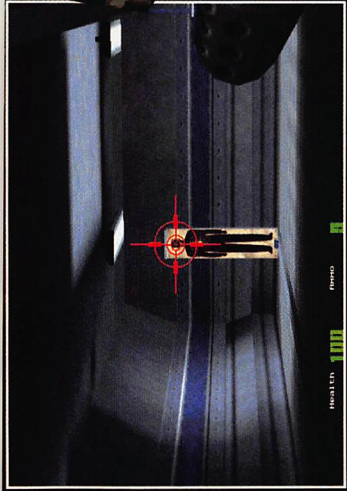
Jim Dosé: We're pretty happy with having made the change, but in hindsight, if we knew when we started the game that *Quake 2* wasn't going to happen until Christmas, we probably would have done more enhancements to the *Quake 1* engine.

Mark Dochtermann: But whether you're licensing the engine or not, you always end up doing some sort of development because you want to make your game stand out. You want it to have a technological edge. That's one reason we are developing our own engine in house; the *Uberengine*.

GR: Can you talk about that at all?

Mark Dochtermann: Basically, the *Uberengine* takes everything you know about engines today and throws it out the window. The lighting will be more advanced, the geometry will be more advanced, how you build things will be a lot different. But we aren't prepared to say yet what games will use the *Uberengine*...

Look for details about *Ritual's* incredible *Uberengine* in a future issue of *Gamers' Republic*.



The ritual tribe (above, left to right): Mark Dochtermann, programmer; Mike Wardell, Level Designer; Zack Belica, Audio Producer; Harry Miller, CEO; Charlie Wiederhold Level Designer; Richard Gray (Levelord), Level Designer; Tom Mustaine, Level Designer.



The master of all matters level design oriented, Levelord (below) the animation of the shrieking embryo you will encounter in Elexis' laboratory.



Finally, a challenger for Twisted Metal 2, and salvation for fans of vehicular combat games on the PS! Activision's Vigilante 8 should fill the gap and provide some intense heat for the competition this summer. With a solid theme, mind-boggling engine, and almost a dozen immense tracks, V8 is quickly shaping-up to be much more than tomato juice... it could be the king of the genre.

Talented developers Luxoflux have assembled a psychotic band of 12 'vintage' '70s characters for V8, each with their own tricked-out set of wheels primed to kill. There's Dave, the space hippie, with a secret "Invasion" radar weapon attached to his Van that calls in squadrons of mini UFOs to pester opponents. And Beezwax, a fat old hick with a '72 Camper that showers deadly swarms of radioactive bees into the fray. None compare to Boogie's Disco Ball attack, however.



"...incredible must-see pyrotechnics are a marvel..."

VIGILANTE 8



Of course without strong graphic support, games of this type just don't fly. Luxoflux have managed to code an amazingly robust engine for V8; a detail that won't go unnoticed by hardcore gamers. Flanked by gorgeous car models, rich arena-like environments, terrain that can be seen incredibly far into the distance, as well as lighting and transparency effects, V8 is clearly the best looking vehicular combat game to grace the PS. The incredible must-see pyrotechnics are a marvel of their own, and since almost everything in sight can be destroyed, the end result is a satisfying spectacle of fiery chaos!

Our version isn't quite done yet, although it's very promising. With a little tweaking of the controls (they're problematic right now) and some collision refinements (which comes with beta testing), V8 should be an incredible game well worth purchasing. Wait for the review, and more details next month. **MIKE GRIFFIN**

Intense Vehicular Combat!
Step back into the 70s and ride...



An Interview with V8 Creators

Luxoflux

GR: How long have you been working on V8?

Luxoflux: Almost exactly one year now. We started coding in the middle of March '97. We had other issues with getting development systems and stuff, so we couldn't really start work until then, but we were sort of working on design stuff before that.

GR: The engine in V8 is amazing. How are you pulling it off?

Luxoflux: Ha ha, that's a good question. I think we really didn't look too hard at other games on the PS, no, we tried to approach it freshly. We didn't really have too many pre-conceptions about what it could or couldn't do so we just kept on pushing and pushing until we found as much as we could get it to do. We were sort of shooting for more realism and sophistication in games and that's how we approached this game. We wanted to make it a much more real experience.

GR: How did you decide on this theme?

Luxoflux: Well, I think we'd be lying if we were to say that V8 didn't start off as being related to Interstate '76 on the PC. Actually, when we originally started talking to Activision, this was the project that they

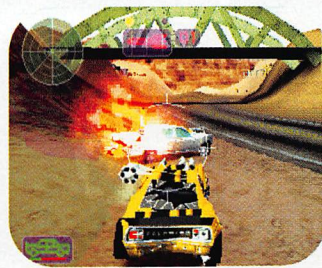
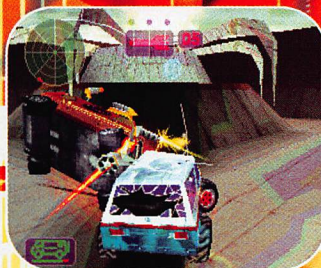


GR: What inspired the track design?

Luxoflux: Well, that's what attracted us to this game: That we could invent arenas, levels, that don't follow your standard model of 'world locations'. We were actually able to find interesting environments within the American South West, which normally you wouldn't think of as your standard location of choice.

GR: I agree. Did you actually go to these places and take location shots?

Luxoflux: (Peter) I've personally been to most of the locations in the game, a few years back, when I drove across the U.S.. I took many pictures which served as inspiration for the levels.



"...most of the levels are based on locations which actually exist.."

pitched to us. We love the theme of I'76, and we could see that making a game based on this kind of theme would have a lot of potential on the PlayStation console. As we started working on it and designing the game, it sort of evolved on its own, departing dramatically from what I'76 was on the PC.

GR: Right, it became arena-based.

Luxoflux: Yeah, but technically and graphically I think it's a much more sophisticated game than the original PC version was. There's more of an arcade feel, everything about it is more arcade-like. We don't want to put the Activision stuff down, but I think we've pushed the concept a lot further. And since it's a console game, we wanted to make it much more arcade-based, more 'action packed' so to speak.

GR: I'm amazed by how fast it loads. Can you explain this?

Luxoflux: Many people have said the same thing. Uh...we just did it, I guess. It's one of the good things we're happy about.

GR: What were you going for in terms of weapons and items?

Luxoflux: We've done a lot of work on the weapons that are specific to each enemy. They'll do a lot of interesting, very controllable things. We've also got a number of special moves, which are secret. Each vehicle will have its own specific weapon, hidden inside crates. You run over the power-up, it mounts onto your car, and it gives you a special weapon. In the case of Boogie's Leprechaun, for example, it's a giant disco ball.

GR: How is the level design being handled, and how many will be included in the final?

Luxoflux: There will be a total of twelve levels and hopefully some secret ones. It's a process of designing level specific stuff, so some of them aren't completely done. We keep on throwing in these extra features... heh, strange things will happen on a level by level basis.

"since it's a console game, we wanted to make it much more arcade-based, more 'action packed' so to speak."

We also did a lot of other research and created several image libraries, so most of the levels are based on locations which actually exist.

GR: Do you consider Twisted Metal to be the strongest competition for a game like this?

Luxoflux: Yeah well, we are being compared to Twisted Metal. We're not sure if it's a good or a bad thing, ha ha. It's one of those much-loved games and I think maybe it's hard to compete against a game that is so well-liked. We're really trying to do our own thing anyway, and not follow whatever Twisted Metal has done. If the comparison is favorable, then we're happy to take it, but we don't want to be stepping on anyone's toes. We are hoping there's more room in this particular genre, just like there is in the fighting or corridor game category, where we can stand out on our own.

GR: Can you hint at what your next game might be?

Luxoflux: We can't say much right now about our new game because we're in the process of negotiations with Activision. Ah... certainly if Vigilante 8 becomes successful, it's quite safe to expect a sequel out of Luxoflux.

GR: What genre could your next game might be?

Luxoflux: Personally or internally here we are hoping that one day we might be able to create another character-based game. We're a pretty small company here, there's just five of us, so we can only take one project at a time.

GR: Okay guys, thanks a lot for your time and good luck with V8!

Luxoflux: Thanks, and good luck with the magazine! Thanks to all at Luxoflux for their help.

incoming operations manual, marine!

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Scoring games has become a rather fraught process over the past few years, with an archaic and highly problematic percentage rating (or bastardizations thereof) generally being accepted as the basis for covering games (and ensuring that any game marked below 90 percent wasn't worth looking at). In an attempt to distance ourselves from such a system, we've developed an easy-to-view grading at the end of every review based on the gaming experience as a whole (wrenching a game apart in terms of sound, playability and graphics is also an overly laborious and ultimately inaccurate way of reviewing a game).

Four comments of interest (either positive or negative) are added with a sentence to sum up the writer's whole experience. This way, the entire review can be digested at your gaming leisure, and the salient points remain fresh and easy to remember. Tell us what you think; we'll be constantly updating and tweaking the reviews section over the coming months, but for now, check out just how our scores break down...



THIS MONTH

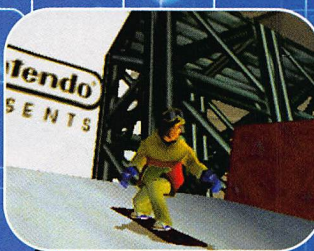
1080 Snowboarding	B
Bio Freaks	C-
Blasto	B
Burning Ranger	B
Bust a Move 3	C+
Crime Killers	C
Dead or Alive	B
Deathtrap Dungeon	D-
Diablo	B-
Die by the Sword	C
Einhandler	B+
Gran Turismo	A
Hexen 2 Mission Pack	B+
House of the Dead	B-
Judge Dredd	D+
Mystical Ninja 64	B+
Need for Speed 3	A-
Panzer Saga	A-
Pitfall 3D	C-
Rascal	B-
Shining Force 3	B+
Starcraft	A-
Tekken 3	A
Tenchu	B
Warioland II	B+

Games marked in **RED** are recommended for your gaming collection.

Games marked in **ORANGE** should be avoided completely.

Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a **B** or higher is an instantly recommended purchase. Game scoring a **D** or below should be forgotten about immediately. Games scoring a low **D** or **F** should be ritually burnt and/or buried in a landfill.

- [A+ to A]** Games in this bracket are the indubitable cream of the crop. They feature the very best in visual presentation, with excellence in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, or an extremely close approximation thereof. *Example: Final Fantasy VII*
- [A- to B]** Games in this bracket are excellent, solid and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Factors such as slight graphical glitching coupled with a marginally disappointing ending may mar an otherwise exalted release. *Example: Tenchu*
- [B- to C]** Games in this bracket may have some great elements to them, but these are let down by one or two quite major problems; such as a limited movement, irritating sound or speech and a lack of foresight in the level design. Passable entertainment; nothing more. *Example: Crime Killers*
- [C- to D]** Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the design stage and/or hurried. *Example: MK Mythologies: Sub Zero*
- [D- to F]** Very rarely will we come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Fantastic Four*



Reviewed by
Bryn Williams



1080°

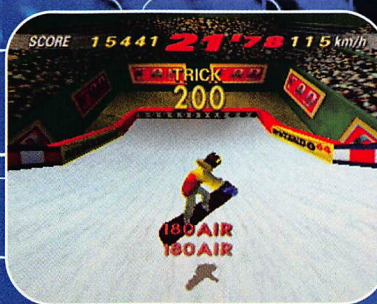
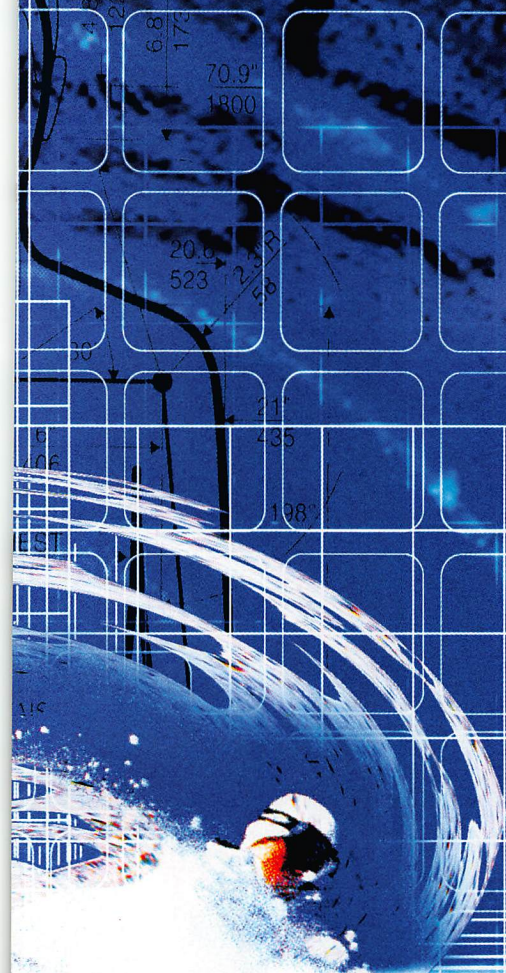
For many, the release of *1080° Snowboarding* (the 1080° is so-called for the player's ability to perform a 1080° rotation while sailing through the air with a large flat, board strapped to their feet) will be seen as an important turning point for the N64, not least because it is one of the finest console racing manifestations ever to have graced the gaming community. Nintendo relied on the development team responsible for *WaveRace 64* to design and implement a game that was to be technically and visually stunning, while still retaining "that old Nintendo gameplay magic", and I'm pleased to report that the project was a total success.

As with *WR 64*, the player is given many different styles of play, including Match Race against one CPU player, Time Attack, Trick Attack, Contest mode and a comprehensive Training mode. In-game characters include six different people (five guys and a girl of varying nationalities), there's a choice of eight boards (incidentally, all of which are authentically taken from the Lamar '99 range), and three different skill levels. Initially there are four courses to race and practice, and as the more difficult ability levels are mastered, a total of eight tracks become playable.



1080° snowboarding

big mountain+powder-breakneck speed



Control of 1080° is achieved via the N64's analog stick, but rather than having a button assigned as a 'brake', you must move the stick sharply, thus allowing your rider to dig the board into the snow and causing him to slow. The control method is absolutely intuitive, and once mastered, is one of the best ever encountered. It is excellent to see more intuitive gameplay than just shifting left and right while you race. By this, I mean that you can perform many different tricks, take alternative routes, and generally be creative, selective and inventive when participating in the variety of grueling courses. Also watch for extra enhanced graphical effects such as wind-ruffled coats on the snowboarders.

SNOWBOARDING

29.6" FINGERTIP HGT.
751

36" CROTCH HGT.
914

Now to the visuals. 1080° has some of the finest graphics ever seen on the N64. From awesome powder effects on the ground, soul-chilling snow storms, flood-lit trick ramps, and gnarly sheer mountainside drops, 1080° wipes the axiomatic competition (*SnoboKids*, *Cool Boarders 2*) off the piste. At times, the fast-paced movement and flow can suffer from a little slowdown (especially in the two-player mode and when the ominous lens-flare appears), but these minor points rarely detract from gameplay and overall enjoyment. It should also be noted that during the split-screen two-player races, the backgrounds and effects have been cut down dramatically (as you'd expect). The most surprising N64 anomaly is usually the bane of the system; the dreaded fog. Of course in a game that takes place entirely in foggy conditions, this lends itself to the Nintendo's software limitations, and the issue

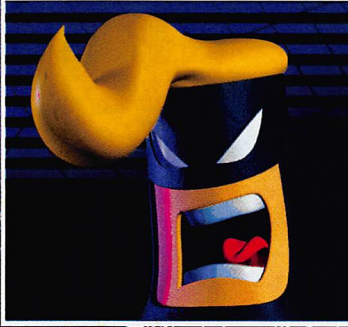
has been dealt with superbly (as you can see from the smattering of screenshots). The music is adequate, containing the expected, par-for-the-course scores of drum-'n-bass, sample-ridden techno, and mellow chilled-out tunes. Nothing spectacular, which is a shame given that the N64 has the ability to pump out some exquisite musical scores like the ones encountered in *Geoman 64*. However, this minor discrepancy in a title that is an absolute joy to behold fails to take away from the overriding sense of enjoyment garnered from the graphics on display here, and deserves to bring much success to Nintendo in the racing game genre. We can only hope that this seminal snowboarding title paves the way for many more developers to strive for excellence in disparate genres in the future. Definitive snowboarding action at its finest.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ THE MOST INTUITIVE CONTROL METHOD ON N64. ■ INCREDIBLY REALISTIC LENS FLARE AND POWDER. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NASTY CPU A.I. MAKES HARDER STAGES INFURIATING. ■ PRETTY DIRE TUNES. MUSIC SHOULD BE MUCH BETTER.
REPUBLIC SAYS...	
A DEFINITE CHALLENGER TO THE N64 'KING OF RACERS' CROWN. LOOK PAST THE MINOR IRRITATIONS AND ENJOY THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE.	



A game's engine can make it or break it, and in *Blasto's* case, the latter nearly transpired. Smartly though, Sony took heed when early warning signs arose at last year's E3. *Blasto's* prophesied buzz turned out to be more of a faint murmur as player after player complained of the dreaded "Background Turner Syndrome" that so plagued *Bubsy 3D*. Could the game's creators re-tool *Blasto* before it was too late?? Would Sony execs green light the expenditure of cash needed to revamp *Blasto's* engine?? Or would they do as so many others do and simply market the horse hockey out of it and throw

Blasto we need you!!



6.8"
173
70.9"
1800



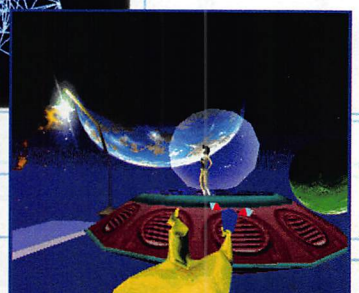
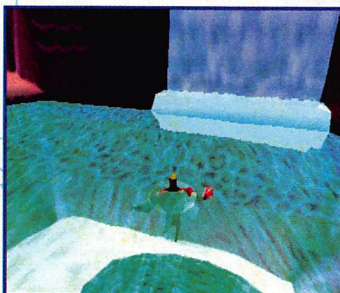
BLASTO

It's all about savin' Uranus...
Sony's much-awaited purveyor of justice is finally here

By Dave Halverson

At the moment, the only hope the human race has for survival rests on the very wide shoulders of Blasto; Space Explorer, weapon freak, and all-around alien eradicator. He's just what the world needs: A universal patriot who wants nothing more than to rid the universe of slimy green aliens. Psychologically unstable? Maybe. Trigger happy? Possibly. Earth's last chance? Definitely! Uranus is on the line and Blasto's here to save it!!

Is Blasto the last hope for mankind?



caution to the wind?? Well, heck no. This is Sony after all and as far as I know they don't take failure (or success) lightly. *Blasto* has been repaired and is making its way to the sparse 3D platform genre with an entirely new engine in tow. Space cowboys everywhere can prepare to roast ET's sorry ass and liberate Uranus in a 3D adventure that is not only thoroughly entertaining but conjures up a challenge that'll bring back fond memories. Phil Hartman brings it all to life with the single best video game dub in gaming history so "Grab a mop; there's gonna be guts on the ceiling"...

The levels in *Blasto* start out big and graduate to immense, each divided into sections strewn with vertical and horizontal elements. Much of the gameplay consists of searching out switches which once activated open up or link new areas. Further play-mechanics include a *Mario*-esque Swim Mode and a free flying Jet Pack Mode. Each play a key (and well thought out) role in completing *Blasto*'s mission. Weapons, power ups, lives, invisibility, shiny reflective invincibility and other such invigorating icons are sprinkled strategically and intelligently throughout each area. So vast and atmospherically diverse are the episodes that even though the gameplay stays relatively the same (save stiffening difficulty), each resembles a game all its own, making *Blasto* vastly replayable. And rightly so, continues are limited and although numerous free lives are a

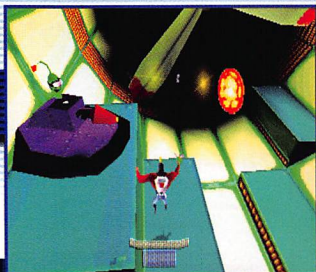


generous commodity, *Blasto* is packed with trial and error. You'll be starting over frequently until you've mastered every gameplay element.

Truly unique in *Blasto*'s structure is the placement and rate of appearance of the story's alien factions.

As *Blasto* approaches, they materialize suddenly emitting a radiating sound, thus alerting *Blasto* of impending laser burn.

From there, *Blasto* can perform a quick flip-turn to deal with foes who appear suddenly behind him, or use his tip-toe strafe, the most important technique in the game to master. The diabolical enemies in *Blasto* have cunning A.I. to an almost scary level. What's even creepier is that once you've cleared an area, it isn't necessarily alien-free. Passing back through to collect any hidden bonuses that have appeared since you last surveyed an area, you'll often find a whole new squad of maniacal Uranians waiting to ambush our hero. Pausing the action brings up a display depicting how many you've killed and how many remain. There's bosses too, both big and small and all nasty.



Everybody needs a little Kay Efcee!

In this case an 8-foot tall, blue, plucked chicken. *Blasto* runs across this delightful creature in the Uranus dunes. Kay Efcee can run fast, jump high and lays eggs that hatch into homing off-spring! He can't climb though, so don't get too attached.

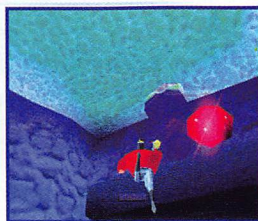


Blasto's impressive quiver of weapons (such as the Lockenburn Heatseek 360) do as their insignia describe in stunning fashion, and proper weapon displacement is key if you intend on reaching Bosc's Fortress with any continues in tow.

I'm a 3D action/platform hog and *Blasto* surpassed my expectations. So many mixed opinions left me with low expectations, so you can imagine my glee when I discovered a well planned out and structured 3D romp complete with witty commentary, a space-age motif that screams sequel, and a galactic challenge.

Tiny the 12-foot tall man-eating Snarf...

...Is just one of the many formidable foes *Blasto* must square off against to fulfill his mission objective. *Snarf*'s a real pain in the keester just to get by and you can pretty much forget about killing him. *Blasto*'s foes range from small to large in size but they are all brutally serious about sending *Blasto* into the galactic hereafter. Good ol' 16-bit pattern-based boss fighting meets its 3D kindred spirit.



■ SUPERB CHARACTER DESIGN AND MOTIF.
■ EXCELLENT OVERALL DESIGN AND BALANCE.

■ VAST REPLAYABILITY AND GREAT COMMENTARY.
■ THERE'S A BIG BLUE CHICKEN ON URANUS!

B

REPUBLIC SAYS...

PRODUCER J. BEARD AND CO. HAVE MADE A BELIEVER OUT OF ME... AND PHIL (SEE PG. 110). THEY MAY AS WELL BEGIN THE SEQUEL NOW... BLASTO'S GONNA HIT PAYDIRT.



One of the last great Saturn games While the term "pushes a system to the limit" has become a bit cliché lately, it's the only real way to describe exactly what *Burning Rangers* does to the Saturn. It pushes so hard that the game actually seems to crack at times. In a strange, almost oxymoronic way, *Burning Rangers* is easily the most beautiful, and unattractive game I've ever seen on Sega's system. Using an updated *Nights* engine, there are incredibly vibrant textures, amazing pseudo light-sourcing, heavily-detailed rooms larger than anything attempted on the machine before, along with incredibly animated characters. Yet, at the same time, the pop-up is quite apparent, textures stutter in and out at random, and the frame-rate often dips far below the "acceptable" 30fps mark.

If you can look beyond the graphical downfalls though, you'll find an incredibly potent game, rich in both visual effects and playability. Be warned though, much like *Nights*, this isn't an easy title to get in to. You'll have to give it time to get used to the almost too-fluid controls (the range of movement, which includes double jumps, flips and rolls, is almost daunting), and be prepared to trek through levels more than once in order to get an impressive score. Once you've got everything set, get ready for one hell of a ride. You've got to find survivors placed throughout the first three levels, while keeping your eyes (and ears) on incoming fires. At the same time, you also have to constantly run around and extinguish blazes, less the pressure gets too high resulting in flash backdrafts. There's also huge bosses to worry about, along with an incredible last stage, which gives you more than a few unique challenges. *Burning Rangers* even has a high amount of replayability, thanks to a randomizer that places new survivors in different areas and opens up new areas once you defeat the game.

Yuji Naka, the incredible mind behind *Sonic* and *Nights*, has never been known for conventional games, and this rings true for his latest project. *Burning Rangers* is challenging, unique and most importantly, fun. I couldn't think of a better first-party game to help close the chapter on Saturn's awkward American life.

BY RYAN LOCKHART



FUTURISTIC FIRE FIGHTING

Brave raging infernos, giant robots, and glitchy textures in *Burning Rangers*, easily the greatest fire fighting game ever made.



- COMPLEX LEVELS WITH INCREDIBLE DESIGN
- INTUITIVE CONTROL AND ACTION-PACKED GAMEPLAY

- GRAPHICS ARE PACKED WITH VISUAL EFFECTS...
- ...THAT CAN GET QUITE GLITCHY AT TIMES

REPUBLIC SAYS...

IF YOU CAN OVERLOOK THE GRAPHICAL PROBLEMS, YOU'LL FIND AN INCREDIBLY PLAYABLE, AND FUN SATURN TITLE. ONE OF MY FAVORITES ON THIS SYSTEM.

B

While it's always sad to see a system fade away, in the Saturn's case, this was a long overdue event. It's strange though, that the last batch of first-party titles, which include *Panzer Dragoon Saga*, *House of the Dead*, *Shining Force III* and the game featured here, *Burning Rangers*, could be considered one of the best line ups in the system's history.



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PlayStation

Dead or Alive

Reviewed by Mike Hobbs

When people were playing *Pac-Man*, I wonder if they ever thought that someday, they would get to play a game where women's bouncing breasts were the main attraction? Probably only the sickos, but that's exactly what you get with Tecmo's excellent PlayStation conversion of their arcade title, *Dead or Alive*. But far from being a one note gimmick of a game, *DoA* actually has a decent amount of depth and gameplay ingenuity on hand to complement the blatant attention-grabbing tactics of displaying bouncing polygonal boobs. And in a strange

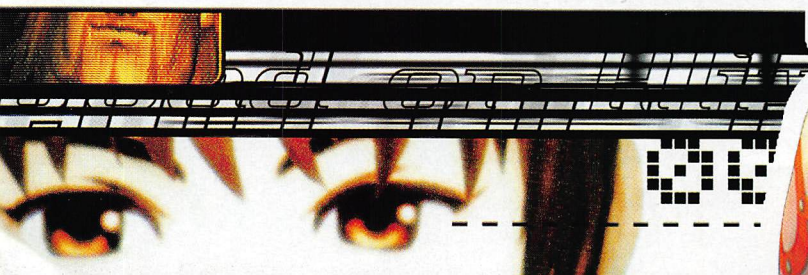
twist of fate, *DoA* also represents the first and only PlayStation conversion of a game that originally appeared on Sega's Model 2 hardware. So in essence, all those who've fantasized about what *VF* or *FV* might have looked like can now get an some kind of idea.

In relation to the Saturn version of *DoA* (which also ran at a juicy 60fps), the PS rev excels with larger and smoother characters which benefit from some special-looking lighting effects and envelope processing. In the negative column however, the 2D backgrounds on display here

are deathly dull, without even the pseudo 3D effects of the Saturn version. But with that said, both iterations severely pale in comparison to the arcade.

Owing to its heavily Sega-influenced design, *DoA* has always felt like an illegitimate son of *VF*, and believe me, that's no bad thing. While there are plenty of PPK style combos, certain *VF* trademarks are eschewed in favor of some more overtly exciting design choices. Perhaps the biggest single alteration is the elimination of the block button in favor of the more 2D "hold back"

WARNING! Approaching Hazard **DANGER ZONE →**

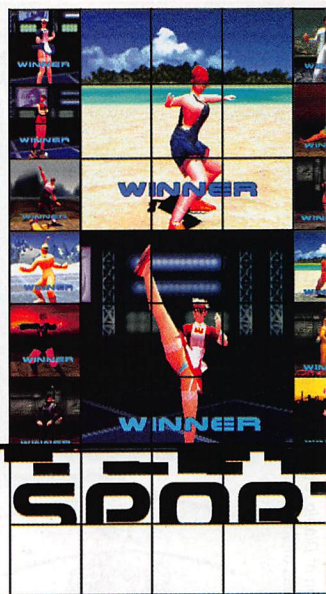


Game now on stage.

Tecmo went overboard when it came to character costume variety. Kasumi has no fewer than ten different outfits, and all have at least five. It's a nice little incentive to play through the one player game. Sadly however, there are no individual endings for any of the characters, just a credit sequence and a little strip of non-character specific black and white FMV. I guess they had to cut corners somewhere...



RECOMPENSATIVE



KASUMI



JANN-LEE



LEI-FANG



BAYMAN



TINA



HAYABUSA



ZACK

A fine selection of both men and women of varying martial arts schools bound into play for Dead or Alive. Strangely, the lumpy parts of the male's anatomy fail to jiggle uncontrollably at a victory. Less polygons, you see...

method, with the "block button" now functioning as a counter. It lends a different dynamic to the fighting, but can be somewhat abused. Two experienced players may find themselves attending Counter-fest '98 on more than one occasion. But over time, it becomes more and more strategically useful and exciting.

In a crowded market, Tecmo's DoA is better than most. The impressive looking characters meld wonderfully with the slightly Sega-ish overall feel, striking a fine balance of graphics and gameplay. The inclusion of counters and explosive rings further delineates this game from its brethren, and when you throw in the sheer number of character costumes, you end up with an above average title.



alive

Which is more interesting?

■ INCREDIBLE GRAPHICS WITH VIBRANT LIGHTING.
■ PRODIGIOUS BREAST-BOUNCING TO PLEASE THE MALES.

■ TONS OF CHARACTER COSTUMES ADDS TO THE FUN.
■ AS A FIGHTING GAME: JUST ABOVE AVERAGE.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

A FAIRLY CAPABLE FIGHTER ENHANCED WITH PLENTY OF GIMMICKS AND STRONG ARCADE PEDIGREE. SHOULD PLEASE ALL BUT THE MOST HARDCORE FIGHTING FANS. GOOD FUN.

B



EA finally graces PlayStation owners with a respectable console version of *Diablo*, Blizzard's 2D action adventure that shocked the PC industry when it was released two years ago. Regardless of some graphical shortcomings and the lack of Battle.net, it is still an impressive achievement on the PlayStation.

When Blizzard North originally released *Diablo* (an isometric action adventure with RPG elements) in early 1997, it leapfrogged its way to the top of the charts and was heralded as "1997 Game of the Year" by several esteemed gaming publications. Although *Diablo* was an absorbing single-player experience, many agree that it was Battle.net (Blizzard's free online gaming service) which led *Diablo* down a path of continued popularity over its existence. Now EA graces us with a PlayStation version, and although it isn't quite as polished and lacks some features, it is still a worthy game for many reasons.

For one, *Diablo* PSX is packed with the same aura of suspense that the PC game was famous for. The music (perfectly translated) alone exudes horror, and traversing the dimly lit catacombs stirs up emotions of fear and trepidation. Creep into a torch-lit room filled with sarcophaguses and before you know it, a horde of sword-wielding skeletons and screeching demons leap from the shadowy corners determined to add you to their list of victims. This tense atmosphere alone grabbed me and kept me absorbed in the game for hours of continuous play. *Diablo* also features mazes and objects that are randomly generated each time you start a new game, what lies around the next corner is always in question which amounts to an abnormally high replay value. Furthermore, to make



You begin your journey in a quaint town populated with friendly folk with lots to say, but as they describe the terrible events that have plagued them of late, you begin to understand the horrific nature of what lies ahead of you...

DIABLO

Reviewed by Dave Rees

up for the loss of Battle.net, Climax implemented a two-player mode (described by many as a modern version of *Gauntlet*) and added some PlayStation-only graphical enhancements such as multi-colored lighting and reflective surfaces. But more importantly, the character control is dead-on. This is a primary concern of mine because the PC version is strictly mouse-driven, but the well thought-out scheme for the PSX controller and an auto-aim feature actually provides a more enjoyable experience over using a mouse. However, primarily because of its 2D nature (and your TV resolution), *Diablo* PSX does tend to miss the boat in the graphics department. The characters lack detail both in aesthetics and animation, and some of the backgrounds look a bit bleached. Furthermore, the ignoble slowdown bludgeons the experience with an occasional visit, particularly when playing in two-player mode.

Ultimately, those looking for an improvement over the PC version might be let down, but for those PC-less PSX owners, *Diablo* provides a solid, engrossing adventure that will likely please.



- WELL-ADAPTED CONTROL FROM THE MOUSE ORIGINAL.
- RANDOMLY GENERATED DUNGEONS ADD TO REPLAY.

- SLOWDOWN SHOWS UP NOW AND THEN.
- GRAPHICS PALE WHEN COMPARED TO THE PC VERSION.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

A RESPECTABLE CONSOLE VERSION. REGARDLESS OF SOME GRAPHICAL SHORTCOMINGS AND THE LACK OF BATTLE.NET, IT IS STILL AN IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENT.

B-

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GR01

Square gives us their interpretation of a 2.5D blaster and creates the most visually stunning "no break" shooter ever.

Let it be known that Square's *Einhänder* is hands down the most visually impressive shooter ever to grace the ubiquitous Sony PlayStation (*Philosoma* and *Raystorm* have nothing on this 60fps dose of eye candy). From the wonderfully delicate polygonal model of your ship, to the huge, brilliantly realized bosses, this game grabs hold of your visual cortex and holds it hostage. And thankfully, the gameplay is more than up to the task of providing the graphics a strong framework with which to perform their magic.

Einhänder, though fully polygonal, is pure 2D side scroller in its gameplay. While the camera may dramatically swing around on occasion, you're still maneuvering only in the x and y axis. This has the benefit of keeping the control tight and tidy, with a classic 2D shooter feel.

In Japan, *Einhänder* was rather awkwardly labeled "no break shooting", and what this basically means for you as a player are levels that flow into each other one after the next. It is as if the game is one gigantic level; you'll never see a break in the background. It isn't something that affects gameplay all that much, but it does lend a rather epic feeling

to the proceedings.

Now, if there is a criticism to be leveled against this game, it's the same that plagues most every shooter with highly developed visuals; it is perhaps a bit short. Not dramatically so, but enough so that you're definitely left wanting more. However, I doubt that any shooter fan will complain, for the sheer beauty of this title and its satisfying gameplay are wholly acceptable trade-offs for any length issues it may have.

EINHÄNDER





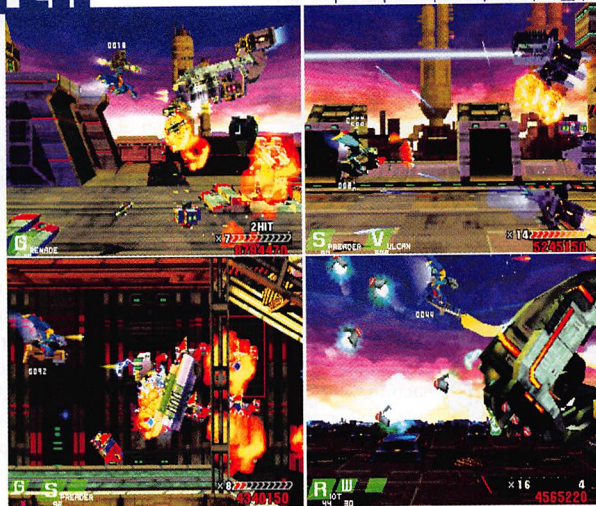
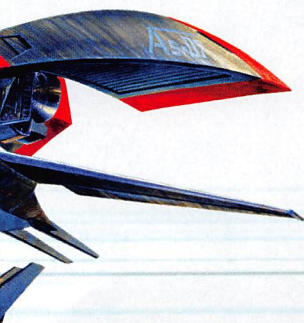
As I mentioned, one of the treats of *Einhänder* are its intense and involving boss encounters. Rarely have such incredibly designed and animated foes presented themselves for your destruction. You'll marvel at the visual presentation of each and thrill to their devious patterns.



SIDE SCROLLING SHOOTER

Like any good shooter worth its salt, *Einhänder* features a pleasing weapons system.

As you enter the game, you're given a choice of one of three ships, each with different Gunpod-carrying capacities (Gunpods are weapons snatched from stationary enemies that run the gamut, from homing missiles to highly charged electric bursts). Using your ship's manipulator arm, these Gunpods can be positioned above or below your ship for maximum destructive efficiency. The Mk.II can carry a selection of three Pods, with any one available for use, while the Mk.III can carry only one Pod at a time but has a more powerful standard shot; good for beginners. Then there's the Mk.I which allows you to carry up to two Gunpods simultaneously for some creative shooting. These range of fighters should suit just about any player's taste.



■ THE BEST-LOOKING SHOOTER ON THE PSX. PERIOD
■ INCREDIBLY DESIGNED MID AND END BOSSES

■ CLEVER AND HIGHLY FLEXIBLE WEAPON SYSTEM.
■ ONE LEVEL SHORT OF BEING AN ABSOLUTE 'A' TITLE.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

A STATE-OF-THE ART SHOOTER, *EINHÄNDER* BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO AN OVERLOOKED (AND DOMESTICALLY NEARLY FORGOTTEN) GENRE. A LITTLE SHORT OF PERFECTION.

B+

REVIEWED BY
MICHAEL HOBBSExact driving mechanics and jaw-dropping visuals
plus over one hundred cars to trick up!

GRAN TURISMO

REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

Featuring all the intense driving that made the *Ridge Racer* series famous, along with more tracks and cars than any other racing game, Sony's stunningly realistic racing title hits the U.S. shores with the throttle wide open...

It's not often that you can call any one game the very best of its kind, but Sony's *Gran Turismo* simply does so many things right, it nabs that distinction with ease. Developed by Sony's Polys Entertainment internal development team (the folks who brought you *Motor Toon Grand Prix*) *GT* is literally staggering in its breadth, realism, technical achievement, and most importantly, playability. In terms of pure driving pleasure, only the taut *Rage Racer* can give *GT* a run for its money.

Initially, it's the sheer number of cars on hand here that grabs much of the attention. Over one hundred real world cars along with numerous racing configurations give the player unprecedented variety. But more than just being shells, *GT*'s highly-evolved physics model ensures that each car performs eerily like its real world counterpart. And virtually every aspect of a car's behavior can be altered through upgrade parts. Roll bars, balance shafts, clutch plates; all these components and more are open to tweaking with tangible results nearly every time. You'll find yourself becoming incredibly involved with whatever vehicle you choose as your own and over time, the control over your car becomes almost mythic.

Stunning too are *Gran Turismo*'s graphics. The tracks are wonderfully detailed and the frame rate is a smooth 30fps at all times. Also, these are simply the best car models I've ever seen, especially when viewed in *GT*'s jaw-dropping replays. Here, vehicles are awash in specular highlights and simulated reflections that at times almost convince you that you're looking at video footage. Watching the cars careening through corners and bumping over curbs is truly awe-inspiring as excellent replay camera placement takes full dramatic advantage of the action. Anyone who even remotely considers themselves a driving fan has no excuse not to play this game. It literally is the best all-round racer that has ever been produced for a game console. And while I consider *Rage Racer* and its ONE perfect track an almost religious

experience, in a "desert island" situation, I'd go with *Turismo*. There's just so much to this game and such fun to be had, you'll be playing it for months. Seriously. Fantastic stuff.

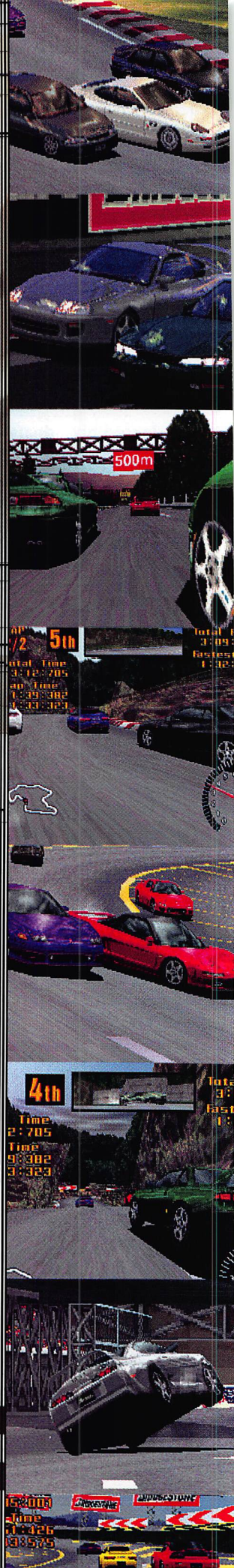
■ BEAUTIFUL GRAPHICS AND STAGGERING PHYSICS.
■ DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS REPLAYS. NO CAR SHORTAGES!

■ UNMATCHED OPTIONS ADD MONTHS TO THE GAMEPLAY.
■ EXCELLENT CONTEMPORARY TUNES AS YOUR DRIVE.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

REDEFINES WHAT A QUALITY RACER SHOULD BE. MIND-NUMBINGLY GOOD. HIGHER JUMP TAKE-OFFS, A COUPLE MORE CARS AND QUALITY MUSIC MAKE THIS BETTER THAN IMPORT.

A



THE DEMONESS

THE NEW CHARACTER CLASS IS THE RED-SKINNED DEMONESS, A FORMER MINION OF EIDOLON WITH INHERENT MAGICAL SKILLS. SHE IS STRICTLY A LONG-RANGE FIGHTER, WITH LIGHT ARMOR, HIGH SPEED AND MULTIPLE PROJECTILE ATTACKS. HER SPECIAL POWERS INCLUDE SHORT-RANGE FLIGHT (LIKE GLIDING) AND THE ABILITY TO CONVERT DAMAGE INTO MANA IN TIMES OF NEED.

HEXEN II

More magic-slaying, mace-smashing action courtesy of those fantasy fiends at Raven Software!

MISSION PACK

portals of praevus

Reviewed by Dan Jevons



What do you expect from a mission pack? New levels? Check! 15 new expertly designed levels comprising two 'hubs'; an underground castle and an all-new Tibetan continent. New enemies? Check! Two new creatures for you to battle (small explosive bouncing blobs called Pentacles and giant minotaurs called Yakmen; none killed unfortunately) along with some new variations of existing *Hexen 2* monsters. New weapons? Check! Well, kind of... The returning characters don't have any, but Raven have added a fifth character class, the Demoneess, complete with new weapons and abilities. New graphics and sounds? Check again! *PoP* contains original redbook audio, a real-time movie intro and ending, awesome new effects (like realistic falling snow) and no less than 600 new textures, expertly applied to avoid 'repetitive dungeon syndrome' and give the new levels a unique and exotic look.

You'll notice I used the word 'new' a lot. This is definitely a good thing. However, this being a Mission Pack and all, not everything is new. What remains the same is *Hexen 2*'s

patent brand of exploration, puzzles, item management and good old hack-and-slash action. The upside of this is that *Hexen 2* was (and is) a great first-person shooter...

The downside is that *PoP* also features the same flaws that tarnished *Hexen 2*. The 'common' enemies (spiders and archers) are still annoying to fight with close combat weapons; you only get four weapons per character (not counting the Tome of Power) and you occasionally find yourself wondering back and forth between levels looking for your next objective (although, to give credit where credit is due, the new levels are arranged in a much more logical and linear fashion). *Portals of Praevus* also uses the same engine as *Hexen 2*, a modified version of id Software's *Quake* engine. This may not be quite as cutting edge as it was when *Hexen 2* was first released, but it still looks damn good, especially if you are lucky (or should that be smart?) enough to own a decent 3D accelerator. A lot of the credit has to go to the level designers.

The environments look as good as they play, with dramatic architecture and excellent attention to detail. The event scripting is especially impressive. My only real criticism of *PoP* is that the whole experience is over too soon. I finished both hubs in one sitting, and while I appreciate that mission packs are not supposed to be huge, a few more levels would have been nice. Still, this is a quality product and an excellent continuation of the *Hexen 2* franchise; exactly what you would expect from developers as talented as Raven. I thoroughly recommend it to any and all *Hexen 2* fans seeking a new fix. Besides, if you want to use the Demoneess with *Hexenworld*, what choice do you have? Good job Raven... now get on with *Heretic 2*!



GRAPHICS AND LEVEL DESIGN ARE STILL STARTLING.
THE NEW CHARACTER CLASS IS A WORTHY ADDITION.

LOGIC LEVEL LAYOUT, AND EXCELLENT SPELL EFFECTS.
THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE IS OVER MUCH TOO SOON.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

WITH THE MARKET STIFLED BY FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS, TO PLAY EXTRA QUESTS FOR ONE OF THE BEST 3D CORRIDOR GAMES OUT THERE IS A QUICK BUT FUN EXPERIENCE.

B+

Intense real-time Dragon flight
Featuring fantastic environments... ambient music... exotic designs



Stripe Win

It is a harsh time for Saturn owners in the U.S.. The system's production has been unofficially halted, third party development is basically non-existent, and only a handful of Sega's own games are appearing before the summer. Sadly nothing has been announced for the third and fourth quarters. All this, just as the Saturn's popularity in Japan is peaking, easily out-selling the N64 due to loads of great titles from the likes of Capcom, Konami, and other respected companies.

Well... at least we have *Panzer Dragoon Saga* in the U.S., one of Sega Japan's best Saturn offerings ever. Not even SOA could pass up on a game of this calibre.

Saga is an amazing achievement in game design, just like the previous *Panzer* games. Team Andromeda are surely one of the most accomplished game makers ever. Their

unique art style is now legendary, as is their ability to maximize the Saturn's weak 3D capabilities. They've blessed Saga with an incredible engine chock-full of software effects, 30-fps frame rates, and gorgeously deep environments.

In conjunction with this fine engine, Andromeda has designed an epic gameplay experience spanning four discs. As Edge, you'll explore strange techno-organic landscapes, learning of the Empire's sinister plans and the intriguing history of the Panzer world and its people. You'll fly through awesome watery valleys, mesmerizing deserts, and gaping mountains atop all manner of Dragon types (customizable to be defensive, attack-based, magical, or balanced). The battles are turn-based, with an exciting view-changing system (vaguely similar to previous *Panzer* games) and intelligent on-the-fly menu commands. Inside towns you'll romp around with

AN AMAZING SENSE OF IMMERSION AND HISTORY



PANZER DRAGON SAGA

By Mike Griffin

Edge and visit shops, exchange stories with local hunters, or sit by the campfires listening to the tales of wandering gypsies, all in 3D.

Panzer Dragoon Saga is a cinematic hybrid RPG that only Team Andromeda could provide. It offers a scintillating apocryphal tale of magic and deceit, excellent gameplay, and a quality presentation that defies the pre-conceived limits of the system. Sega isn't producing very many copies of the game, so be sure to pick one up if you spot it.

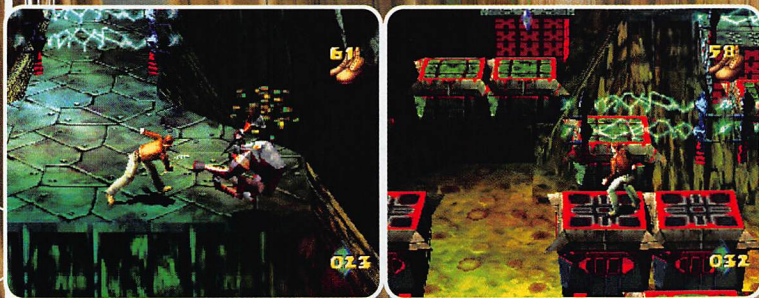
■ BEAUTIFUL DESIGN AND STUNNING ART STYLE; UNIQUE.
■ FINE BALANCE BETWEEN CG AND REAL-TIME GAMEPLAY.

■ STRONG AESTHETICS PUSHES THE SATURN FAR.
■ RICH IMMERSIVE STORYLINE. SOLID TRANSLATION.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

COMING TO THE U.S. AT A HORRIBLE TIME FOR THE SATURN. THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY SUCH STRONG PRESENTATION AND STORY TELLING IS SECOND-TO-NONE. TRACK IT DOWN!

A-



Reviewed by Dave Halverson

Pitfall Harry's 3D debut is a mixed bag

It all started back in 1982 when Activision set a 2D benchmark on the then-sensational Atari 2600. Pixel man Pitfall Harry battled mad scorpions and Crocs, swung over hazardous caverns and jumped his way into the annals of gaming. When one thinks of the series of games that ensued, certain memories immediately spring to mind... swinging vines, Johnny Quest like scenarios, David Crane (he's alive and well by the way), the benchmark it set and a fairly memorable dose of junglemania with stunning animation on the Genesis and short lived 32X. Circa 1998, Pitfall's first foray into the rapidly evolving world of 3D gaming is at hand, and so without further ado...

As the requisite CG opening unfurls, Pitfall Harry's swinging around the South American Jungle when he comes across a glimmering crystal. Grabbing it, he opens a rift from which emerges Mira, a shapely Moku with a story to tell. Mira tells Harry about a pure energy substance called Lucense and how one of the Moku harnessed the power of the bad Lucense (that would be the red kind) transforming himself into a Scourge and then placing a force-field around the entire Moku city. Of course, Harry jumps in to save the day and the game begins.

Pitfall 3D's gameplay, for the most part, is fairly straightforward platformer fare. Each area is stuffed with floating and/or disappearing plates which hover mysteriously above well-lit 3D environments. There's ample amounts of dodging, vine-swinging, and clever pick-ax maneuvering as well, along with a spattering of forgettable enemies who pop out

of the ground to provide a means for dying other than falling, and little else. Problematic are Harry's rather stiff and unforgiving jumping, the overall predictability of it all (text book timing maneuvers abound) and the repetitive nature of the areas you traverse. In the plus column are the long levels, a solid engine, generous lighting effects and a minimum of polygon fallout. I also appreciated the clever use of loading; comic book pages introduce each level objective while you wait. As for the bosses well, they're ambitious enough, but the control's just a bit too stiff to enjoy what undoubtedly looked great on paper.

Perhaps it would have all come together just a little bit better had the music done anything but lay there and die like so much stereotypical bongo mania... or maybe if the voice-over wasn't so incredibly dull. Harry's voiced by Bruce Campbell who turns in the single worst commentary in the history of gaming. This guy makes Dana Gould sound like William Shakespeare. The cornball one liners soar like houseflies on a sugar high with all the dramatic flare of a plain baked potato.

Pitfall 3D isn't a bad game but rather, more of a me-too derivative of an over-crowded genre. *Pitfall's* roots are in 2D, and like *Contra* (and so many others that have made the mistake of going 3D just because it's the flavor of the week) that is where I think it should have stayed.

PITFALL 3D
BEYOND THE JUNGLE

LONG LEVELS WITH EXCELLENT LIGHTING EFFECTS.
HAPHAZARD COLLISION AND DEPTH PERCEPTION.

BORING MUSIC AND UNINSPIRED VOICE ACTING
PUCKY PLATFORMING WITH STIFF JUMPING. A BAD MIX

REPUBLIC SAYS...

PITFALL 3D IS AMBITIOUS ENOUGH, BUT IN THE END THE GAME JUST DOESN'T GEL. IT'S A BIT STIFF AND CONTRIVED FOR MY BLOOD BUT I RESPECT THE EFFORT.

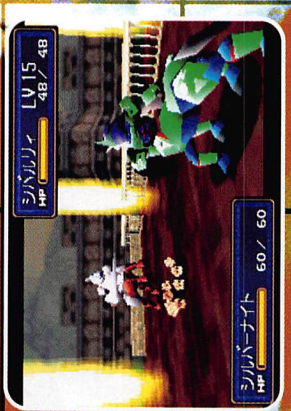




An integral feature in *Shining Force* games which distinguishes them from pure strategy games is the town exploration they offer. In *SF3*, the towns are fully realized 3D environments of their own, populated by many little rendered townsfolk. These include port towns, castle towns, train-station towns, and many small villages. Inside, you'll be able to explore in true RPG style: Shop, trade, heal, find clues and characters, or stop by the church to resurrect slain party members, remove poisons and hexes, or advance the class of your characters. Very detailed, and very thorough.



The *Shining Force* series is fully represented in 32 bits...



SHINING FORCE 3

By Mike Griffin

Historically, the *Shining Force* series has been one of Sega's most successful RPG franchises worldwide. The combination of addictive, immediately accessible interfaces, and awesome anime-type plotlines has earned the respect of RPG players everywhere. And although the Saturn is slipping into a cold, eternal sleep in the U.S., somehow Sega has decided to port-over the first Scenario in the epic *Shining Force 3* trilogy. So, while we won't be able to appreciate the full magnitude of all three 30-plus hour quests, and the intense, continuous plot-line that flows between three discs, we'll be playing a damn fine game regardless. That alone, under these conditions, will have to be enough.

I've completed *Shining Force 3* several times now, acquiring all the secret characters and exploring every possible locale, and I must say this is unquestionably the best game in the series. Sonic Software and Camelot haven't tampered with the simple, perfectly implemented menu system, nor have they changed their commitment to scripting exciting, climactic storylines. Instead, they've added all the 32-bitness fans could have hoped for. The engine is rock solid, the loading is amazingly quick between maps and battle scenes, and everything, polygonal or rendered, is well-animated and effective. It's still 100% *Shining Force*, any fan will agree, but now it's in smooth, detailed 3D.

As a matter of fact, the engine is so good, most battles actually have two full maps to wage the fight over. For example, a large forest battle map has a curious looking temple hidden beneath trees. Mid-battle, by sending a part of your crew to the temple, you may enter, into a separate dungeon map, complete with enemies to take on and treasure to plunder. The game seamlessly (in no more than two to three seconds) loads between the two maps, keeping track of all characters and actions in both locations. I love this feature. The joy to be had in sending in a powerful little task force to raid the temples, while your main force contends with the odds on the main map... is just excellent, trust me.

In the past, I've played through and enjoyed the likes of *Vandal Hearts* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*. *Shining Force 3* is a better game than either of these, hands-down. Why? It has more character, it has infinitely cooler environments, better graphics, faster gameplay, epic twelve-on-twelve fights, fantastic music, and glorious 3D towns to explore. It also feels right, all the time, and flows beautifully from battle to battle.

Shining Force 3 is a wickedly fun strategy RPG, and a must-have game for Saturn owners. Actually, both *Panzer Saga* and *SF3* are so good, it might be worth picking up a Saturn just to play these games. With the recent discounts you might find the system for a little over fifty bucks, and *SF3* shouldn't be much more than \$40. It is a sad situation, I know, but a game this good needs to be played. Look for it.

Secret characters like this Wolfman can be found everywhere! Look carefully...

Shining Force veterans know it: Secret characters can round-out your twelve man party perfectly. In *SF3*, they've been hidden in particularly cunning locations. Here's a couple for you: When you find the stubborn Wolfman in town, use your character to push him around the stream, right into the headquarters entrance. Suddenly he'll join the crew!

Also, look for the Ninja in the first split battle map; the tower above the clouds. Send a crew into the cave and search the pillars in the back-right corner.

- SUCCESSFULLY PRESERVES THE SF LOOK & FEEL IN 3D.
- SPLIT-SCREEN BATTLES INVITE NEW STRATEGIES.

- AMAZING ENGINE, FAST LOADING & EXCELLENT EFFECTS.
- COOL ANIME-TYPE PLOTLINE, MEMORABLE CHARACTERS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THIS IS PURE SHINING FORCE AT ITS BEST, AND YET ANOTHER LATE GENERATION TECHNICAL WONDER FOR THE SOON-TO-BE-EXTINCT SATURN.

B+

In a sea of pretenders to the real-time strategy throne, a new champion has risen from the depths of delays and hype. The future of strategic combat is upon us...

A monumental futuristic struggle unfolds...



Massive hordes of perfectly animated troops converge on carnage!

Building on that classic *WarCraft* model meant a couple of matters had to be taken into consideration when Blizzard began the mammoth undertaking that would eventually result in what essentially is one of the finest real-time battle simulations of today. Firstly, tweaks were needed to ensure the follow up wasn't merely a futuristic version of the Orcs and Humans fantasy setting, with power-armored marines replacing shiny-armored knights. Secondly, the new forces themselves (Terrans, Protoss and the Zerg) needed to be interesting enough to get to grips with automatically, and produce enough devastatingly impressive troops to bond with even the most picky sci-fi fan. Special goo attacks would have to be just the right shade of green, every sci-fi movie from the past twenty years would be used as a reference, and the guttural roars of a Zerg predator needed to sound like a cacophony of mandibles screeching, and not a Poodle coughing. With this in mind, Blizzard took their time, and finally granted PC gamers with a startlingly involving game which shakes the foundations of the whole real-

time strategy genre and sends it spinning into the 21st Century.

Most impressive of all, once the tremendously epic introduction has transpired, is the attention to detail and solidity of the gameplay of this entire project. Whether you're witnessing the involving single player game with an unfolding storyline of momentous proportions, or battling seven of your friends over massively expansive terrain, you'll be struck at how monumentally cool all your little troops look. They animate excellently, every one has their own little comment about the unfolding chaos they're in, all of which adds immeasurably to the playing experience. The 15 different units you can create per species are all excellently well-rounded and each have their own set of strengths and shortcomings (as well as upgradeable abilities), and all have the sorts of powers you expect them to have; there's no hugely expensive cyborg spiders to build and watch scuttle off to die at the hands of three infantry troops. Espionage has never



had as many variations as on display here.

Space prevents me extolling the virtues of this game to any reasonable degree, so I'll detail the couple of microscopically minor failings which prevented this title gaining the 'high exalted' status. Firstly, the incidental music burbling away in the background when playing as the Terrans is pretty dire, and building dozens and dozens of troops to mine is more of a chore than it could have

Blasting the real-time strategy sim into the 21st Century, *StarCraft* delivers a bolt of pure strategic brilliance...

STARCRAFT



been. There's also no way you'll just have time of a quick game on your lunch break (unlike *C&C*); *StarCraft* with two or more like-minded kinsmen can take well over two hours to finish. However, with the potential for updates, new troops, new forces, the campaign editor and a game with so many tactics to learn and utilize, I'd have no hesitation in purchasing a copy as soon as you are able. *StarCraft* is a classic without question. **DAVID HODGSON**

■ TRULY ENTHRALLING GAMEPLAY LASTING MONTHS.
■ LARGE, WELL-ANIMATED TROOPS WITH MANY VARIANTS.

■ ADDICTIVE SINGLE AND MULTI-PLAYER COMBAT.
■ EXCEPTIONAL ROOM FOR EXPANSION AND ADDITIONS.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

DESPITE SOME MINOR GRIEVANCES REGARDING THE MUSIC AND SLIGHTLY LABORIOUS MINING METHODS, THE SHOCKINGLY DEEP AND ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY SHINES. BUY IT!

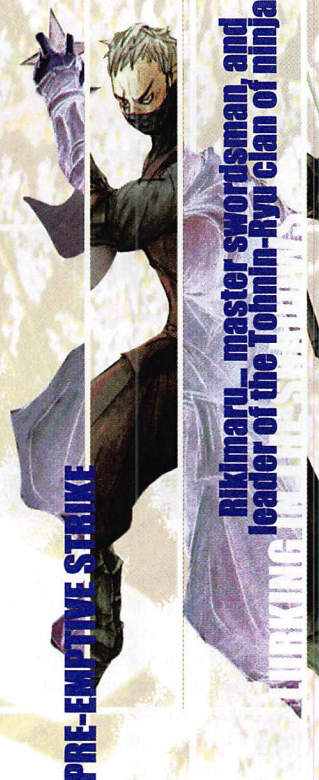
A-

Any gamer who has had the pleasure of seeing Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* in action, no matter his/her personal tastes, knows this infiltration epic is set to deliver all-new never before seen play-mechanics, pushing the PS to new heights. Before *MGS*, however, comes *Tenchu*. Sony Music Entertainment Japan's highly touted (thumbs-up from the Japanese press & public) 3D hide and seek ninja action-adventure. Offering scads of cool go-anywhere assassination action, *Tenchu* is the first of its kind, but like most genre-makers, certain elements may require polishing.

TENCHU 萬



Areas requiring polish are the 3D engine and camera system. While each of the eight levels is absolutely huge, with many enemies, pleasant lighting, and plenty of nooks to explore, a great deal of depth cueing has been used to control clipping. And the auto-camera system, while generally intelligent, will often spin out of control in tight quarters; a brutal occurrence which affects the gameplay. Despite all this, you can't help but get a malicious kick out of *Tenchu*'s main attraction: Stealth assassination. Through a system aptly named "Surrounding Atmosphere", you'll be sneaking-up on opponents (see pictures beneath) for the kill by shielding your character behind



PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE

Rikimaru, master swordsman, and leader of the Tohmin-Hyu clan of ninja

Reviewed by
Mike Griffin

SURROUNDING ATMOSPHERE

Massive 3D landscapes, free-roaming death

Two ninjas living in a time of political turmoil in feudal Japan, fighting for the people, at home in the shadows, unheeding of death's call...

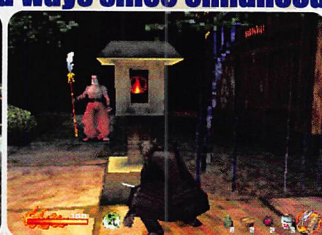
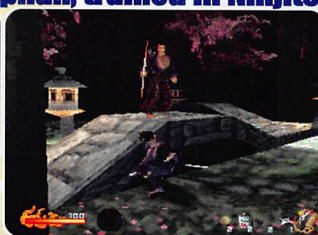
objects in the environment for cover. This type of gameplay is all-new to me, and even after completing the game several times I appreciate the unique play-mechanic and look forward to improving my stealthy skills. It's revolutionary 3D ninja action, and one can be as creative or conservative as one desires to be.

Certain levels offer epic stealth-oriented challenges; really intelligent set-ups and design. Imagine running-up a hillside through a thick forest, precariously close to a sheer cliff-side. The autumn canopy of orange and yellow overhead is absolutely convincing. Rabid wolves roam freely, and deadly sentry archers patrol the mountain pass in wide circles. Giant tree trunks, fortunately, provide the ideal cover for an ambush. Next, picture a bustling port-city, guarded by pirates brandishing razor-sharp muskets and populated by innocent townsfolk panic-stricken by your presence. You'll fight the boss of this level on the deck of a huge galleon ship docked at a port across town. Every level consists of vast amounts of unique locations and situations within multi-layered environments, and for this reason, the stealth gameplay never gets tedious or repetitive.

Fans of 3D action-adventures need to check-out *Tenchu*. You might discover that the enemies, beyond their ability to spot you, are a little lax in the A.I. department (they get stuck in walls, etc.), and that the music is completely inappropriate for most levels. Naturally, if you play this the way it was meant to be (by stealth infiltration), those enemies will be dead before they can glitch. I recommend you shut down the music and mix-in your own tunes for full enjoyment. Except for these minor gripes, *Tenchu* is 100% one-of-a-kind gaming excellence.



Ayame... a stoic and determined orphan, trained in Ninjitsu ways since childhood



- RICH, EXPANSIVE ENVIRONMENTS WORTH EXPLORING
- GREAT MGS-STYLE THRILLS IN FEUDAL JAPAN FORMAT

- WEAK ENGINE, PROBLEMS WITH FADE IN AND GLITCHING
- UNRELIABLE AUTO-CAM WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THE MOST INNOVATIVE 3D ACTION GAME OF '98 (SO FAR). DESPITE THE STUTTERING AUTO-CAM AND QUESTIONABLE A.I., THIS IS A SUSPENSEFUL AND SATISFYING GAME OF STEALTH.



BIO FREAKS

DEVELOPER: MIDWAY PUBLISHER: MIDWAY

Do we really want yet another sub-standard Midway fighting game? Hell no. It is lamentable too, because after about half an hour or so, *Bio Freaks* seems to be pretty cool. The characters are an interesting group, the arenas are expansive and detailed, the engine is smooth and displays some excellent lighting (the use of jets to fly all around the levels is an inspired idea), and I thought the projectile weapons were an excellent touch. Then I played *BF* extensively and discovered the generic sci-fi theme and the moronic blood-spurting intent. Additionally, the combos are uninspired, the battles woefully linear (despite flying and projectiles), and although the blood and slime trails were initially cool, they quickly became over-used screen garbage. In the end I had a lack of residual desire to play this game again... if I did, I'd be renting it.

MIKE GRIFFIN

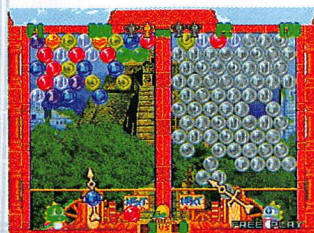


BUST A MOVE 3

DEVELOPER: COMPILE PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

Not to be confused with the dancing beat-'em-up that import PlayStation owners are grooving to, *Bust a Move 3* (AKA *Puzzle Bobble*) features small dinosaurs, bubbles, a bubble-firing harpoon gun and a simple premise; clear your side of the screen of bubbles before your foe by matching up bubbles of the same color until a line of three or more is made. Pure, addicting gameplay (circa 1992), a standard port-over affair of the Compile classic from Acclaim's workhorse, Probe. This features exactly the same graphical prowess as previous versions, almost identical music for a change, and slightly more difficult shot lining up thanks to analog control. Great one-player and two player gameplay, but with no attempt to spruce up the title whatsoever.

DAVID HODGSON

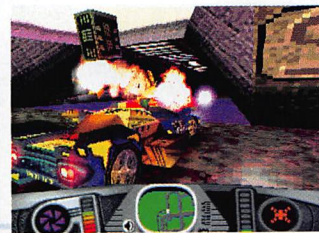


CRIME KILLERS

DEVELOPER: INTERPLAY EUROPE PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY

Nothing grabs a passer-by's attention more than a game running at 60fps. Such is the draw of Interplay's new UK-developed *Crime Killer*. With that futuristic setting and three distinct craft to pilot (car, bike and plane), *CK* aims to please. The game begins to fall apart, however, about two missions into the game, for it is then that you realize that you're doing the same task over and over. Each "unique" mission has you simply driving around with twitchy controls, blowing vehicles up and never really amounts to anything exciting. Even the "flying" levels offer little hope of variety as the plane handles just like the car a few feet off the ground. You can't even fly up or down; making the whole 'off-the-ground' experience redundant. A flashy engine (but with a severely limited horizon) wasted on a completely non-engaging game... equals a boring game.

MIKE HOBBS



DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

DEVELOPER: EIDOS PUBLISHER: EIDOS

What kind of tragedy is this? The worst kind, it would seem. *DD* could be the single most disappointing PS game I've played so far this year. With a rock-solid theme to base a game on, and a ton of input from the Fighting Fantasy creator himself, there was still a lack of planning and competence to produce even an average title. I am forgiving, so I'll somehow ignore the first-generation engine and all of those low-res, choppy flaws. I'll try to turn away from the horribly confusing camera angles, twisted and broken character models, and stiff animation. Well, look deeper and it just gets worse. The puzzles are painfully terrible, the fighting is so choppy and stuttered it'll cause head juddering, and the design is straight-up ugly. Forget *Deathtrap Dungeon*, just like I'm trying to do, and go on with your life. You'll be a better person because of it.

MIKE GRIFFIN

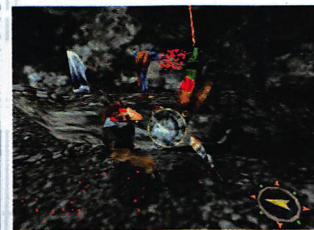


DIE BY THE SWORD

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY

It was only a matter of time before we would see a third person perspective title as ambitious as *Die by the Sword*. No tough chicks with sexy voices here; just a vengeful Scottish knight in rusty armor who serves to skewer the bestiary barring his safe passage, nosh on some beef and breadsticks, and save his favorite maiden from certain peril. Treyarch must be commended for their detailed move editor and robust combo system, but they don't help the wonky character control and the feeling of being disconnected from the action when slashing your enemies apart. Heaps of combat, a dash of puzzle solving and some exceptional atmosphere serves up an experience that is more intense than the usual dungeon exploration; but poor control and shoddy graphics prove to be boils on the backside of an otherwise alluring game. Oh well.

DAVE REES



HOUSE OF THE DEAD

DEVELOPER: TANTALUS PUBLISHER: SEGA

At first glance, this Tantalus conversion of Sega's graphically stunning Model 2 arcade game falls far short of expectations. The incredibly rough textures and at times jerky frame rate (a jerky frame-rate for an on-rails gun game? Unheard of!) seem miles away from Sega's own work on their *V-Cop* conversions. But like Tantalus' previous Saturn translation, *Manx TT*, a sizable chunk of Sega's gameplay excellence shines through. Unless you are completely averse to the gun genre, I promise that you'll have a good time with this game. There is great satisfaction to be had in blowing zombies apart and the game's multi-path system assures frequent re-play. Plus, the actual premise of gothic horror and numerous undead abominations to blast apart serves to further excite and entertain. Look past the graphical shortcomings. Recommended.

MIKE HOBBS



JUDGE DREDD

DEVELOPER: GREMLIN PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

Joe Dredd and his iron chin has been stripped of all credibility over the past five years; turning into some slobbering fool in the abomination of a movie, and no video game has even come close to perfecting the complex world of the comic character. Now we have Gremlin's effort, a lackluster gun game starring British 'thespians' attempting American accents, sets so visually unappealing the folks who made *Disruptor* wouldn't touch them ("this is Dredd... reporting from cardboard shed number three, control."), while Dredd himself sounds like tracheotomised Clint Eastwood. The cut-scenes ruin the atmosphere utterly, but the actual game itself is even worse. Chugging rendered buildings with poorly animated perps appearing in blue mist, and a complete lack of gameplay structure mar what could have been the rebirth of an eminently cool comic character.

DAVID HODGSON

D+



MYSTICAL NINJA

DEVELOPER: KONAMI PUBLISHER: KONAMI

I had high hopes that Konami would see their way clear to releasing *Mystical Ninja 64* here in the states where the series (on SNES) performed less than spectacularly due to its supposed Japanese look and feel. Personally, I think it was just a product of an over crowded market. Regardless, *MN 64* is simply a phenomenal first generation N64 game and Konami (the wisest of the few remaining legendary third parties) have preserved all of the original Japanese singing and the immensely wacky Kabuki theater storyline. *Mystical Ninja's* environments are massive, the play mechanics are as deep as you'll find, and the music is easily the best on the system so far. These are the types of games I thought would be in ample supply when they touted this "quality over quantity system". Grab this game immediately!

DAVE HALVERSON

B+



NEED FOR SPEED 3

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS

Yes, it's been available now for weeks, but *NFS 3* is too good an update to miss. We all remember how poor the PS version of *NFS 2* was; the jerky engine, bad controls; the whole business. Well, the third installment of *Need for Speed* mercilessly destroys its weaker brethren with fantastic gameplay, perfect options, and a glorious new streaming 3D engine. As per the tag-line, "Hot Pursuit", *NFS 3* also has a *Road Rash*-style mode where you race a computer or human opponent around huge tracks while half a dozen cop cars attempt to pull you over. It's great, chaotic fun. The main tournament is just as solid, with plenty of massive, beautiful courses to tackle using the *creme de la creme* of exotic automobiles. Throw in excellent tunes, pinpoint analog controls, and a superlative presentation, and *NFS 3* ends up being one of the top PS racers so far this year.

MIKE GRIFFIN

A-



RASCAL

DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS

Psygnosis' first foray into the burgeoning character-driven 3D action/adventure genre is everything you'd expect from the company who brought us the likes of *Wipeout*, *Formula 1*, and *Colony Wars*. In a chase through time to save his inventor father, Rascal whisks through some of the most detailed 60fps polygonal landscapes ever imagined. 60fps is achieved without compromising any other aspects of the game. The lighting, texture quality, music and gameplay is all thoroughly impressive and immersive. In a perfect world, the animation would be a smidgen more fluid and the environments more vast, but given the PlayStation's abilities I believe they've pushed the envelope. The control does take some getting used to, but ample play mechanics (including swimming, hoverboarding, and puzzle-solving though 18 diverse and unique levels) add to the fun.

DAVE HALVERSON

B-



TEKKEN 3

DEVELOPER: NAMCO PUBLISHER: NAMCO

Those wondering whether to invest in another Tekken need not worry; for *Tekken 3* is certainly a worthy addition to the series. Namco have excelled themselves in this conversion; especially as the gameplay remains identical, and every character between 30 and 120 different moves to learn. The deepest PlayStation fighter of all-time also receives a number of extra additional gameplay modes to lengthen your playing time from weeks to months, including the most in-depth Training Mode ever seen, a cool sub-game involving beach balls, an average walking beat-'em-up (more playable than *Fighting Force*) and a couple of PlayStation-only characters. Those with or without *Tekken* knowledge can instantly jump into the game; the new characters are well-rounded, with stunning CG cinemas completing the experience. The best console fighting game around.

DAVID HODGSON

A



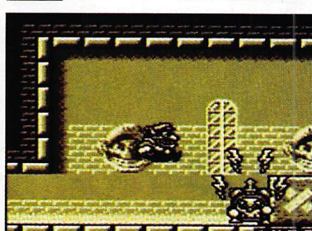
WARIO LAND II

DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

WarioLand II isn't the Virtual Boy sequel I hoped for, but this 8-meg monster GB cart will do just fine, especially since the *LightBoy* is just around the corner! *WLII* will astound GB users with an abundance of parallax (check the water) excellent art, and deep gameplay which features swimming, rolling, throwing, flying, and tons of Nintendo style platforming. Like the VB game, Wario can power-up in to many forms including Fat Wario, Hot Wario, Crazy Wario, Zombie Wario, Puffy Wario, Tiny Wario, and Bouncy Wario. Of course each plays a key role in the game, which has multiple endings depending on your performance. Even the most jaded GB gamer will want this game; Vintage Nintendo magic that makes traveling a pleasure. Now if they'd just get the 64 act going as well...

DAVE HALVERSON

B+





Like any year, sports game sales will constitute a huge percentage of the cash figures reported in '98. All the big companies know this. And while the N64 is expected to have booming sales thanks to must-own sequels like *Turok 2*, *Zelda*, and *F-Zero*, their sports category will have to be strong to satisfy a major component of its user base. The first pro-sport to hit gaming this time of year is usually Baseball, and if this strong preview of Acclaim's *All Star '99* is any indication, it should be a great season for fans.

Under development by Iguana's U.S.

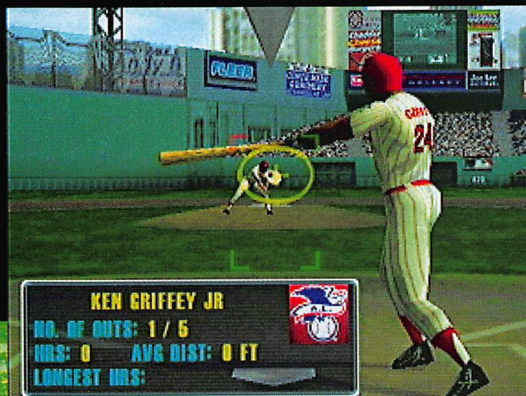
division for the very first time (past hard-ball games were handled by Acclaim's UK-based teams), *All Star '99* should be, at the very least, a technical marvel. Already one can see the talent at work: Complex shading routines, enveloped player models, and the N64 high-res mode running in full, blinding splendor. Additionally, the developers have seen fit to include some dazzling player animation using tons of motion-captured sequences. For example, if the ball streaks by rather too close to the inside of the plate, don't be surprised if your batter jumps back a few steps. Or witness the silky-smooth

release as an in-fielder traps the ball, jumps to his feet, and whips it towards first for the out. The players themselves look great, with realistic proportions and recognizable major league mugs.

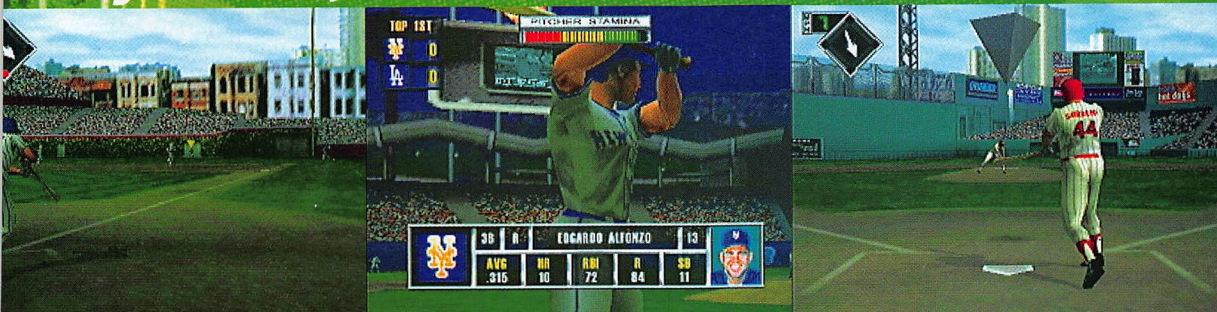
Iguana has also cov-

ered all their bases (ahem) in terms of detail. Season, practice, and exhibition game modes are present and well-accounted for, and a home run derby and player creation feature round out the package. Sure, this is all your typical fare, requirements nowadays in the genre, but the menu interface is first-rate, so everything comes together well. And don't forget, this is a cart, so you can flow through those options right into a game in a matter of seconds. Nice.

All Star '99 might end-up being the best bet for N64 baseball fans this year. While the jury's still out on the gameplay (this isn't finalized yet), the presentation is second to none, and the MLB license has been used to great effect. "But wait!" you say; "if the gameplay's not finalized, how do you know it's that good?" Exactly, we don't. But we'll be telling you in great detail when this is reviewed in our next issue. Keep it here. **MIKE GRIFFIN**



"...All Star '99 should be, at the very least, a technical marvel."



All-Star '99 features great motion-capture & superb use of the high res mode.



ALL-STAR BASEBALL '99

ACCLAIM'S FULLY LICENSED HARD BALL EXTRAVAGANZA



Madden NFL '99

Electronic Arts

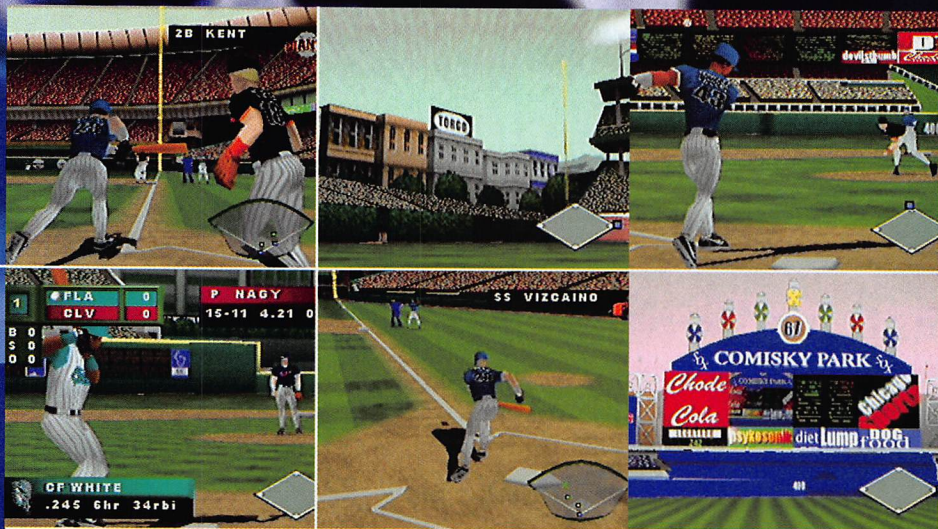


New to *Madden* this year, perhaps in response to Sony's highly successful *Gameday '98*, all the players will be fully polygonal. Each high-res model retains the fluidity and responsiveness of previous sprite-based *Madden* games. Plenty of other realistic touches have been added, including player heads that track ball movement, and incredible animation for close offensive plays such as barely in-bound sideline catches. Also, important running moves (like jukes and stiff arms) are infinitely more controllable in 3D. On defense, players are now able to 'wrap tackle' those tough running backs who refuse to go down. Above all else, the AI has been wholesomely refined through many design sessions with Mr. Madden and high-profile NFL players from every position in the game. The PS version looks especially promising with this new polygonal engine.

EA's fully polygonal football title aims to regain the crown.

Mike Piazza's Strike Zone

GT Interactive



GTI has scored a major coup by securing a full MLB license and signing L.A. Dodgers' all-star catcher Mike Piazza. Developed by Devil's Thumb Entertainment, *MPSZ* will feature all 700+ players, their stats, uniforms, and unique nuances. Weather conditions, time of day, and field surface will affect the gameplay. Some cooler features include a create player option as well as a create league mode where you can control every detail, including logos, trades, and players. Best of all, there's a ton of hidden secrets like hyper-fast pitches, manic curve balls, huge home runs, and incredible, unreal defensive plays.

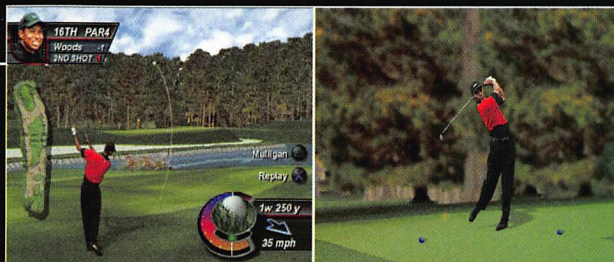


Tiger Woods '99

Electronic Arts



Ah... EA finally upgrades to a more graphically pleasing 3D format. People who are able to play an accelerated PC version of TW '99 will experience smooth, detailed representations of actual PGA courses. In both versions, you'll be able to play with or against Tiger Woods, and thanks to the PGA license, another 14 pro players will be playable. Best of all, EA has developed an incredibly user-friendly Internet functionality for multi-player competition against golfers across the planet.

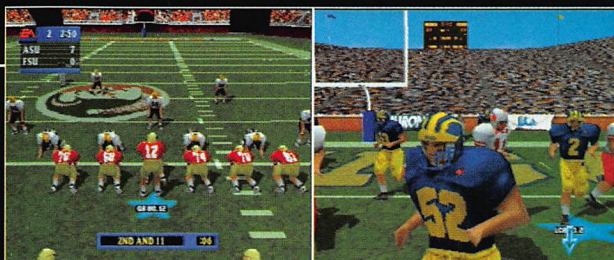


NCAA Football '99

Electronic Arts



NCAA '99 implements the same polygonal engine that pushes Madden '99 along at such blistering frame rates and high resolutions, while preserving the fluid motion of college players. With the Dynasty mode, players can build a powerhouse college team program over the course of several seasons. Expect every division to be represented, with their popular stadiums and banners, in this detailed college pigskin game.



World Cup '98

Electronic Arts



EA scored a huge license with World Cup '98: This is the official game of France '98, and not just a theme-based tag-along soccer game. With a slightly upgraded FIFA engine, and the typically meticulous attention to detail of the FIFA makers at hand, World Cup '98 should be a huge event. All 32 teams and their members will be included, and all ten World Cup venues will be represented in resplendent 3D.



Triple Play '99

Electronic Arts



Triple Play '99 is enjoying high sales due to its impeccable timing, landing in stores practically moments before this season's opening pitch. It's definitely one of the top hardball games out there, certainly one of the best on the PS. With every major feature one could ask of an MLB-licensed baseball game, and this year's new Beginner's Mode and first-person batter view, Triple Play '99 is impressively armed with details and gameplay. What it also accomplishes, through fantastic sound, commentary, and accurate (but slightly choppy) stadium graphics, is the creation of mood and atmosphere. While it's still a patient man's game (unlike Interplay's VR Baseball '99), Triple Play offers good presentation and play-mechanics to keep your interest.

Hot Shots Golf

Sony



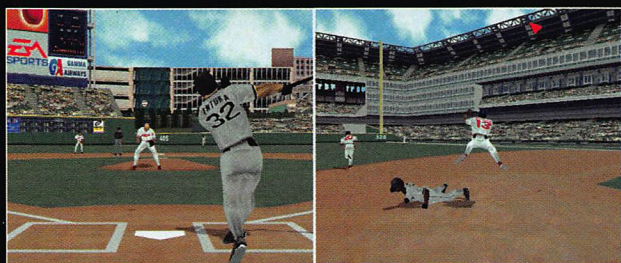
Camelot's Hot Shots Golf parked itself in the Japanese Top Ten charts for six months and it's easy to see why. The game has more options than you can shake a club at, and features a golf engine that T&E or EA would (or should) kill for. Each course is scalable, in full 3D, to a frightening degree as you set up for the swing. Up, down, in, out and all around... throw in some type of space cruiser and you've got a shooter! After clubbing the ball you can instantly summon up a high-quality replay. Gameplay is fast and super accurate. Sony will undoubtedly score a hole-in-one with Hot Shots... unless America's golfers reject Camelot's big-headed characters.

Jeremy McGrath Supercross '98

Acclaim



Here's a title I have high hopes for, although I have doubts based on the latest version, which exhibits some seriously flawed play mechanics. As has been the case with every Motocross game (save VMX), the riders look like mannequins with either lame or no body english, especially when airborne. And the last time I looked, McGrath wasn't racing through farmland. On the upside, the game has excellent lighting, but we've come to expect that much. The developers need to review some footage, and pull a few all-nighters to get McGrath ready for his video game debut. A big name alone does not make a great game.



Big heads, cute characters and an exceptional graphics engine... Hot Shots is ultra cute and ultra playable.



WORLD REPUBLIC imports

Welcome to the World Republic, where citizens assemble to get a glimpse of what's happening in other parts of the world such as Japan and the UK. Since many of the games we'll be playing in the future originate overseas we are placing a huge emphasis on this section of Gamers' Republic. We'll be bringing you timely coverage you won't find anywhere else thanks to our newly appointed correspondent based in Tokyo and our crack staff here at home. If you have any comments or suggestions on the World Republic drop us a line (attention the same) or e-mail at worldrepublic@gamersrepublic.com

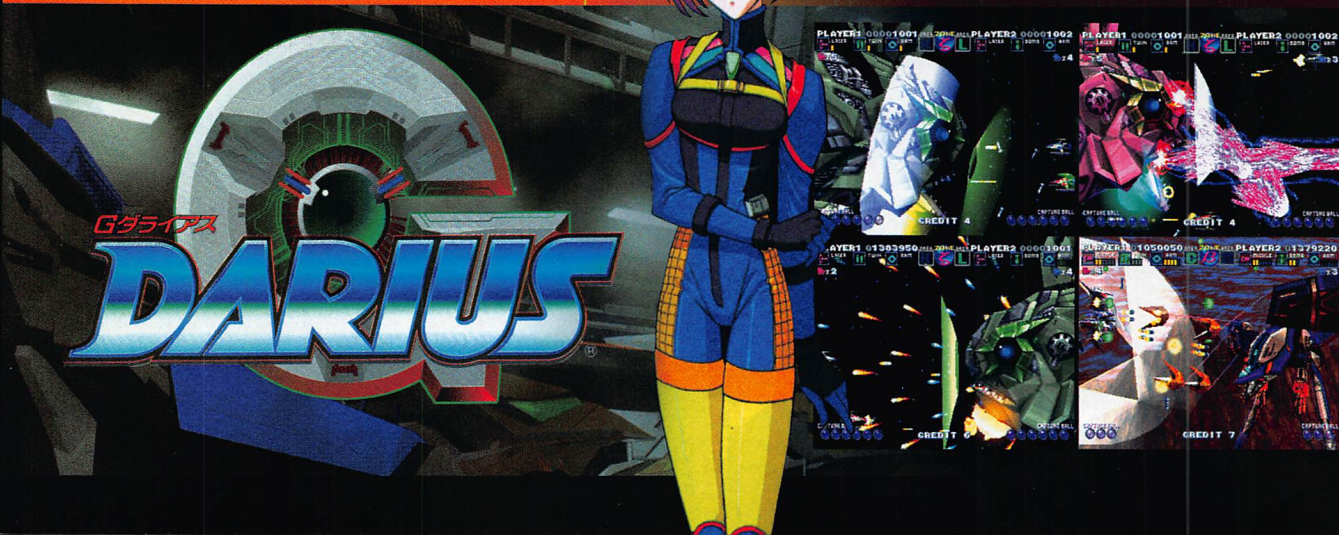
Enjoy the Game Show coverage and brace yourself for next month's explosive Treasure expose!!

G-DARIUS Developer:Sega Publisher:Sega Available:Now in Japan



Taito is to shooters what Treasure is to platformers and Square is to RPGs. And Zuntata, well, when it comes to galactic soundtracks they're in a league of their own. With their newest polygonal offering following last year's blistering *RayStorm*, they drive that point home invariably. Surrounded by excellent CG and wrapped in one of Zuntata's finest soundtracks ever, this polygonal version of the legendary *Darius* series will at once take you back and rocket you forth. Taking you back (all the way to the 1st shooter on the TurboGrafx CD; *Darius*) is *G-Darius*' TM Zuntata tuneage and aquatic theme. Propelling you into the future is the polygonal landscapes and enemies, 3D gameplay, and hard-as-nails difficulty. If you thought *Darius*' 2D bosses were tough wait until you get a load of these mecha-fish from hell. Never have bosses of this magnitude graced a shooter. I know that's saying a lot but take into account that a single boss on easy setting can take 5-10 minutes to kill. And they just don't sit there shooting out dots either. These mechanized Moby's spray forth a variety of pyrotechnics from homing missiles to thick vibrant beams of ecto-plasma, all the while diving in & out of the screen stopping each time to attack you with a different part of their body. In order to brush up on your fish-frying skills a vs. boss feature allows you to fight any boss you've defeated directly from the options menu; cool 'chicken' indeed. All new to the series (and very welcome) is a new recruitment beam where as you can send out an electric stream and latch on to a foe drawing it in as an ally until it dies or you explode it (killing everything on screen). Befriend thy enemy, then use him to do your bidding! You can draw in just about anything, even big stuff, although larger prey require weakening first. In standard *Darius* fare, there are fifteen levels funneling outward divided by five, so that you can choose your course. The game even supports Sony's dual-shock and rumbles mightily when called on. So another *Darius* is upon us. Hopefully Working Design shooter division; Spaz will pick it up quickly as It certainly warrants a US release. This is, in my opinion, the best *Darius* yet.

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SONY PLAYSTATION

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IMPORT

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World Republic Imports

VAMPIRE SAVIOR

The Lord of Vampire

Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega
Available: Now in Japan



It is indeed a shame that the Saturn was never really appreciated by enough Americans. The reasons for this, like everything, are both complex and simple, yet the end result is that games like *Vampire Savior* will forever remain in their native land. And that's too bad, for what we have here is an arcade translation of such technical brilliance and exacting detail that it boggles the mind.

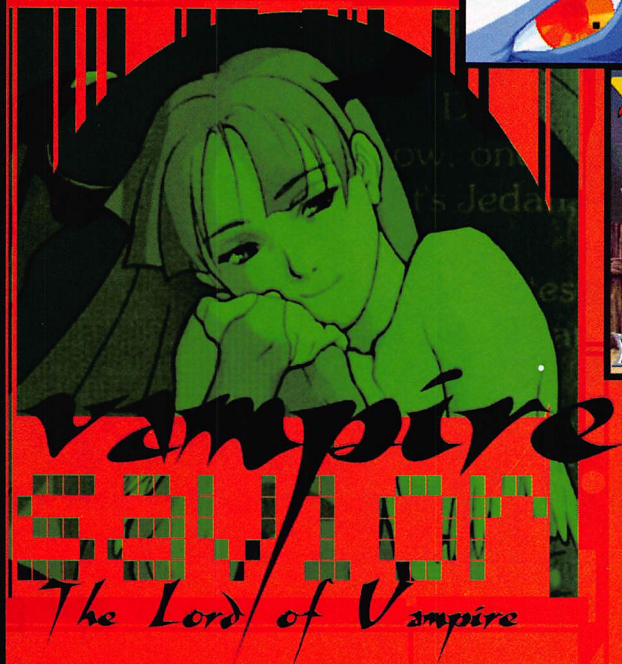
Making use of the four meg ram cart, *Vampire Savior* looks virtually identical to the CPS2 arcade game. Every frame of character animation is in (as far as I can tell) and the backgrounds are literally bursting with motion and color. The line scrolls are deep and smooth and there's plenty of parallax on display. For all intents and purposes, the Saturn, in conjunction with the four meg cart, has effectively become a CPS2 board. Even more amazing is the fact that even with the extra megs, the game loads impossibly fast.

As a game, *Vampire Savior* is exceptional. This is classic Capcom all the way taken to the exaggerated extreme. Perhaps it never reaches the madness of an *X-Men vs. Street Fighter* game, but there's some crazy stuff going on. Four new characters have been added since *Night Warriors* and they are full of insane specials and all manner of Capcom style quirkiness. There's Jedah, an awesome, winged character with a deadly huge sickle. His cohort, Q-bee, a little bee-like girl, has a massive stinging hive of deadly bees. Then there's Bulleeta, the uzi-toting little red riding hood with a dark soul. Finally, Lilith, the other half of Morrigan's soul, cuts opponents down with deadly blade attacks. Overall, the new characters are an extremely entertaining bunch and give VS a wonderfully diverse cast.

It is unfortunate that the very thing that makes this game technically possible is also part of the reason it'll never come out here. It is simply cost prohibitive to bring out an upgrade cartridge only to probably sell less than 10,000 units. But any self respecting Capcom fan/Saturn owner simply must track down an import copy of this game and the ram cart. This appears to be a perfect version of *Vampire Savior*.

MIKE HOBBS

Vampire Savior





POWER DRIFT Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega Available: Now in Japan

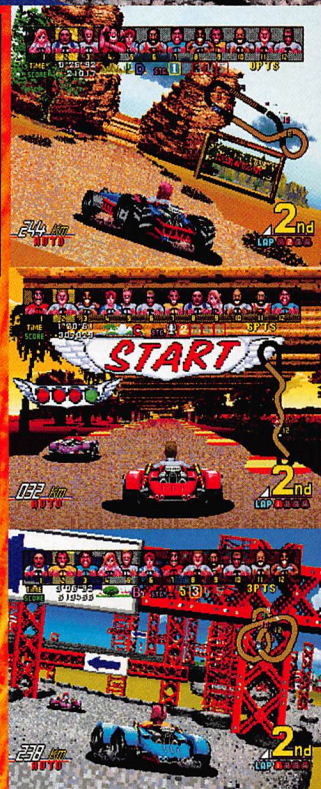


Since the first time I deposited a Quarter in Sega's *Power Drift* coin-op back in 1988 I've prayed for a home version. As it turns out, by the time I got to play it with a control pad, the technology (massive scaling sprites) is sorely outdated but still, *PD* is one 'classic' that I feel was worth waiting for. *Sega Ages - Power Drift* adds to the arcade experience with a new Grand Prix mode, new tracks, and new super arranged music mixes exclusive to the Saturn version. The game, which has stood the test of time splendidly, controls flawlessly with Sega's Analog eye, and remains a frantic and fun kart romp packed with Sega style. After a glut of polygonal racers, *PD* is a refreshing deviation from the norm. Now bring on *Galaxy Force II* and *Outrunners*!

DAVE HALVERSON



power drift



dragon force



DRAGON FORCE 2

Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega
Available: Now in Japan



I'm convinced that there's enough fans of the original *Dragon Force* in the U.S. to warrant a conversion of this fine sequel. Working Designs did a remarkable translation of the first game, and Saturn strategy fans ate it up in large quantities. I'm almost positive these same buyers (you know who you are) would be willing

to purchase the sequel if it contained the same type of awesome interface, action-filled battles, and cool storyline. Well, it does. I've been playing the *Dragon Force 2* import for days and it is safe to say that the necessary improvements have been made, without taking away from the addictive formula.

The main map is infinitely more detailed and scrolls-by in beautifully smooth 'Mode 7', and it's much, much bigger. Also, battle parties can now be split up into two different types of attack divisions. For example, if you pump up your ranks and assemble a full one hundred man army, you could have thirty knights and seventy archers. Or perhaps ninety vicious dragons and ten harpies. Can you imagine a strange division of fifty zombies and fifty mages? This is all possible. Trust me, when your side appears on the field and it's comprised of two different types of fighters, you'll be smiling wildly. Then you'll see that both parts of your army can be controlled individually (unique commands for each faction), all under your complete control. Send mounted knights down the upper and lower wings while a separate squad of archers launch volley after volley of pointy arrows into the core of your opponent's forces from a distance. Excellent fun.

dragon force 2



MIKE GRIFFIN



GAME SHOW '98 SPRING
MAKUHARI, JAPAN
MARCH 20-22

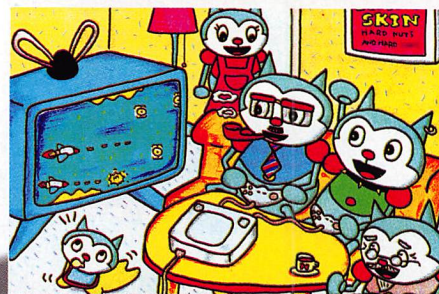
Simply put, the Tokyo Game Show is the largest video game event in the world. Twice a year, nearly 100 Japanese game companies meet in Makuhari to show off upcoming titles to over 140,000 fans, manufacturers, distributors and members of the press.

While the Spring show wasn't quite as packed with hot titles and surprises as the holiday-influenced Fall show, there were still more than a few major announcements and the unveiling of a couple hot new games. In fact, there were over an estimated 470 titles on display for every modern system you could think of (including the Super Famicom!). Over the next six pages, you'll see the best of what the show had to offer, along with some fun bits detailing interesting non-game aspects of the event.

RYAN LOCKHART



Each Tokyo Game Show has a different (and usually disturbing) piece of art that normally has some deep meaning behind it. The image for last year's Fall show was created by Katsuhiro Otomo, the incredibly famous writer/artist who brought us such manga as Akira and Domo. This piece, on the other hand, was drawn by an 18-year-old student named Kei Sato. Picked from over 300 other applicants in a recent contest held by CESA (the group behind the TGS), Mr. Sato's piece was chosen because his entry conveyed the sense of "new" and "luminosity" that the judges were looking for. He was also asked to draw up a few images that represented what the CESA was about, including such themes as "refrain from buying used games because it hurts software manufacturers" and "spend more time with your family." This is all fine and good, but Kei Sato has a bit of a dark side, and apparently knows some English. These two images appeared in the show guide, given free to an estimated 150,000 people. Take notice of the lower picture, and read the framed poster on the wall above the couch ("Hard Skin, Hard Nuts, Hard..."). Now, we blurred out the last word, but lets just say it rhymes with "punt." Gah! Dirty! Funny, but dirty! Not exactly the family environment the CESA was going after I'm sure...



TOKYO GAME



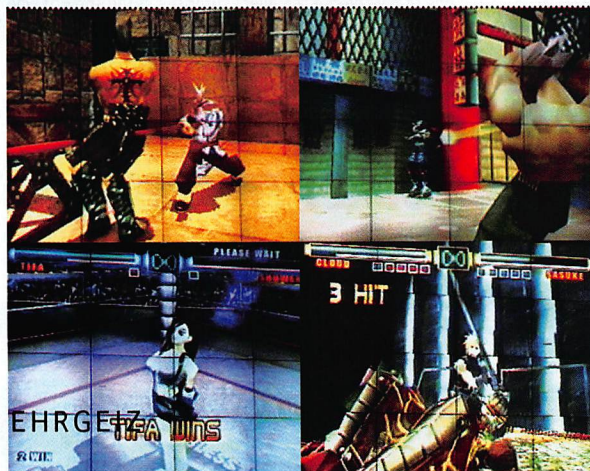
SONY PLAYSTATION

If you take into consideration the amount of incredible titles already available, and the number that are coming in the near future, it's not hard to see why the PlayStation is doing so well in Japan. Still outselling everything else nearly at a ratio of nine to one, and showing no signs of slowing down, Sony's little wonder machine dominated the show by claiming over 50 percent of the titles being displayed. Of course, with titles like *Kitty the Kool! Dance! Dance!! Dance!!!* and *Hello Charlie*, not all of these were quality. In fact, most of them were complete crap. So we've taken the time to filter out most of the effluent, so all you get to check out is the cream of the crop. Have fun!



MASUSHIDEN

While Square's big game for the show wasn't exactly a surprise (it was announced a couple of weeks before), *Masushiden* was easily the coolest game they had on display. Everything about the title, from the graphical quality to the super diverse and fun gameplay reminded me of quality Square games of old, and got my blood pumping. Aside from *Metal Gear Solid*, this was my favorite game of the show... Look for a *Masushiden* update in future issues.



EHRGEIZ

Easily one of the most beautiful fighters I've ever seen was on display at Square's booth in arcade form. Programmed by Dream Factory (the folks behind *Tobal 1&2*) and rumored to be running on a PS compatible board, *Ehrgeiz* impressed me with not only its amazing graphics, but the intuitive gameplay as well. This is certainly going to be a PlayStation port, and even though Namco was behind the arcade version, it is apparent Square is going to be bringing it home.

CYBERNETIC EMPIRE

Wow! Wolfteam are back! That's a name I haven't heard in a while... Anyway, *Cybernetic Empire* was a very impressive (but still very early) action game that had textures similar to *Overblood* and an overall look comparable to *Metal Gear*. It also featured a cool gameplay aspect that allowed you to grab onto walls with an electric "vine" and throw yourself around corners and up onto ledges. Look for screenshots soon!



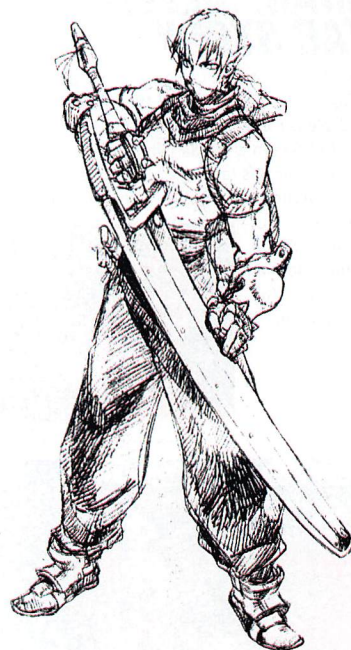
SOUKAIGI

The long awaited *Soukaigi* was fully playable at Square's booth, and was surprising in both its deep playability and incredibly pixelly graphics. What I did experience was quite fun though, and I'm looking forward to its release.



ESTOPOLIS

One of the biggest surprises of the show was the announcement of a new *Estopolis* game, a series known here as *Lufia*. While only art was shown, *Neverhood* (who also programmed the first two installments) promised this latest version would have 3D aspects but still retain the 2D feel missing in many of today's RPGs. Flex is planning on releasing *Estopolis 3* this winter.

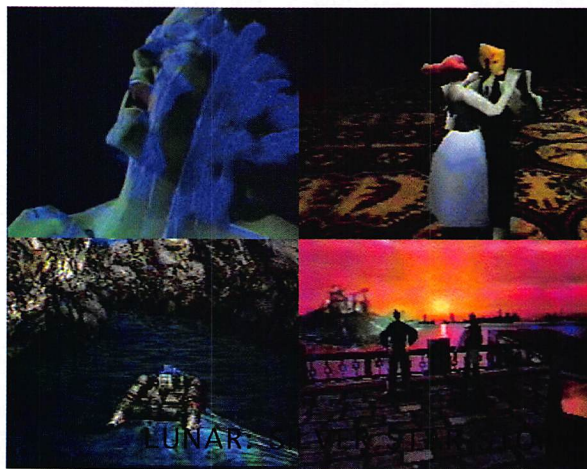


SHOW '98 SPRING



STAR OCEAN: SECOND STORY

It is great to see Enix getting back to their roots. Even though Enix failed to announce anything new (although they are rumored to have 20 titles in development), they had *Star Ocean: Second Story* playable at their booth, and that's all that counts. The sequel to one of the last (and best) Super Famicom games has incredible rendered backgrounds (by Links, who contributed to *FFVII*), CG movies that compare in quality to *Parasite Eve* and gameplay that is thankfully very similar to the original (which features a fast-paced battle system). One of my favorites of the show, *Star Ocean: Second Story* will be out in Japan this Summer.



LUNAR: SILVER STAR STORY

Coming to America later this year courtesy of Working Designs, this port of the Saturn title should please any *Lunar* fan. This has new music, full screen cinemas (which the normal Saturn version was lacking), and radically different storyline events than the original. Check out our Preview section for more information on the English version.



OVERBLOOD

While I can't deny that the name *OverBlood* makes me shiver for all the wrong reasons, the sequel seemed much better than the original. Of course, that's not saying much. *Overblood 2* benefits from a high amount of nicely done CG movies, seemingly improved play mechanics, a cool futuristic setting and better quality graphics. The characters still move like puppets though, which is something they'll hopefully rectify before the release.

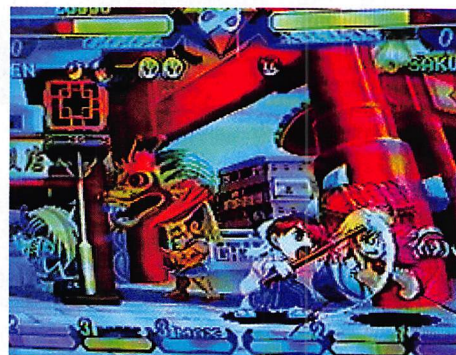


B.L.U.E. LEGEND OF WATER

Although Hudson seems to have a substantial amount of games coming in the near future, their booth was based around, and only really seemed to feature this one game; *Blue*. Displayed on groovy widescreen TVs, this title was one of my favorite "smaller" surprises at the show. It was still quite early, but showed potential with its realistic underwater graphics (I enjoyed the effect as you surface), cool action/puzzle solving gameplay aspects, and RPG-like exploration mode. You also have this cool dolphin buddy you can control with basic AI commands.

POCKET FIGHTERS

The PlayStation version of *Pocket Fighters* looked surprisingly similar to the Saturn version, even without the benefit of a 4-meg ram cartridge. Apparently made for a younger audience than the normal Street Fighter games, Capcom's simplistic three-button fighter should hopefully hit the States later this year.



SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

Also hitting our shores soon thanks to Working Designs comes *Silhouette Mirage*. Seemingly almost exact to the Saturn original in the graphics department (I have heard rumors about missing parallax though in a few levels), the PlayStation version is improved by the addition of an exclusive new boss.



OKYO GAME



SAI

Erm... in one of Sony's two hot titles at the show (see below), Sai had you moving around die pieces at 60 frames a second. Damn puzzle games...

WHAT'S GOING ON THEN SONY?

Okay, Sony's gone mad. At last year's Fall show, they had three RPGs on the floor, a shooter, an amazing racer and a cool action game. This year? A puzzle game and an interactive music title. What the hell? Sure, Sai looked fine, and who wouldn't want to use Sony's new 'music pick thingy' to play songs on their tennis racket, but where was *Parappa 2*? Where was *Wild Arms 2*? Where were the cool and exciting titles? Gah! Sony easily had the most disappointing booth at the show.

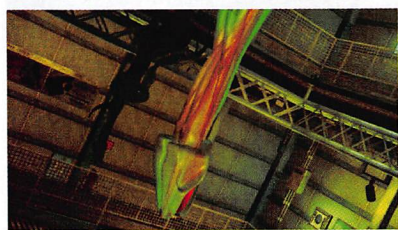
ECSAFORM

Aside from the fact Bandai is the mark of quality, they had two very cool looking titles on the show floor. One of them was *Macross VF-X 2*, and the other was this baby, *Ecsaform*. Even though it was too early to get any shots from, *Ecsaform* looked to be an RPG along the likes of *Final Fantasy Tactics* but with a cool modern/futuristic theme. Oh yeah, and it has damn cool art.

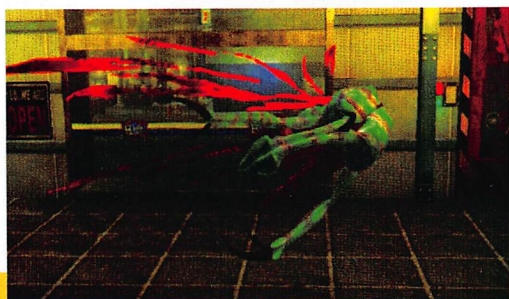


SEGA SATURN

Sure, the Saturn may have plunked over here, but Sega is still going strong in Japan. Well, not exactly strong, but they're still kicking the Nintendo 64's butt, and that's all that counts! Er... anyway, Sega actually had a very good showing, even without the appearance of a new system, along with some major announcements. Unfortunately it seems like third-party support is slowing down, as many of the major companies (including Konami) didn't even bother to display most of their upcoming Saturn products. The games that were on display showed off the Saturn's newly adopted "cool and unique games" theme though, but it's becoming quite apparent this system's not going to last into next year.



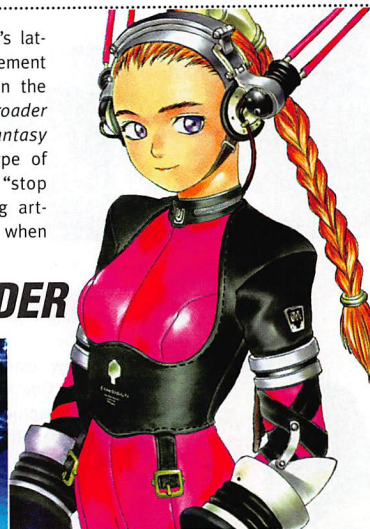
DEEP FEAR



The biggest surprise of the Spring Tokyo Game Show was this new Saturn game by Sega, which easily could be their last major 32-bit release before the launch of the new system. Even though I have absolutely no idea of what kind of game *Deep Fear* is going to be (it was only shown in a confusing CG-loaded video), I can tell you it has a complex alien/horror storyline, something I don't have room to fully explain. Um, just think really scary crap happening under water, hence the name. Cool, eh? *Deep Fear* should be out this summer.

Pronounced "vakenloda", Sega's latest Germanic Saturn announcement was surprisingly hidden way in the back of their booth. *Wachenroader* was another *Final Fantasy Tactics/Shining Force* game type of game, featuring really keen "stop motion" cinematics and amazing artwork. Could be a sleeper hit when released later this year.

WACHENROADER



SHOW '98 SPRING

LANGRISSER V



Wow, another *Langrisser* game; has it been six months already? The scary thing is that *Langrisser V: The End of Legend* really is the end of a legend, as this is Messiah's final game for the series. The very last *Langrisser* has improved battle graphics over its predecessors (with impressive looking spells), the standard ultra cool artwork, and great music. We'll be sorry to see this series go...



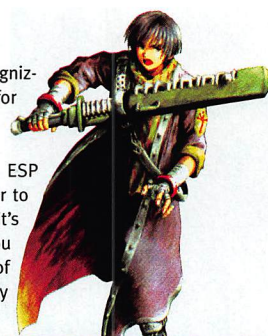
CODE R

What the hell happened to Quintet? The talented guys behind some of the greatest Super Nintendo games ever (including *Actraiser*) apparently lost the plot when they hit 32-bit, as their latest game has you racing cars to impress chicks in their new driving/digital comic title. This caused me much pain.



BAROQUE

While Sting isn't an instantly recognizable name, they've done work for Square (*Treasure Hunter G*), and are now creating an original title to be released under the ESP label. *Baroque* is visually similar to *Soul Hackers*, but certainly has its own unique theme and feel. You fight crazy monsters in a sort of real-time environment. Certainly worth looking into.



GRANDIA: DIGITAL MUSEUM

In what must be the coolest "extra game" ever, *Grandia: Digital Museum* allows you to re-enter this incredible RPG, and hunt down artifacts in three new dungeons. It also has a bunch of new and old mini-games to play, a museum to explore, and modes that allow you to watch the game's FMV among other things. This is cheap, too!



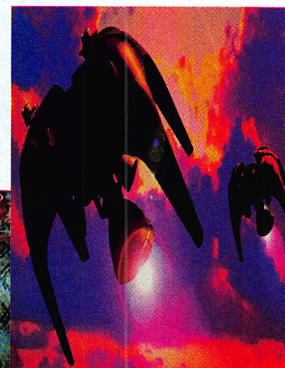
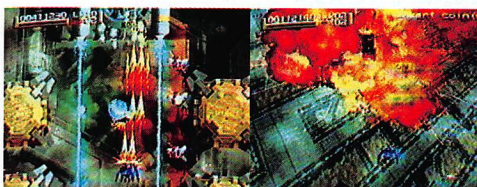
GUN GRIFFON 2

Created by the folks who brought us *Grandia*, *Gun Griffon 2* features more weapons and items than the first, better AI in enemy units, and link-up vs. play modes. This sounds great, but I hope the game lasts longer than the original.



RADIANT SILVERGUN

Treasure's new ST-V shooter was shown in arcade form at ESP's booth. A great looking game, *Radiant Silvergun* had you firing away with really cool-looking weapons while dodging incredible amounts of enemy fire. Sure, not exactly original, but totally cool none-the-less.



SEGA SATURN SHIRO STRIKES AGAIN!

Picture this crazy looking Japanese man throwing kids around, beating everyone in a nightclub senseless, and unsuccessfully kicking zombie ass, and you'll get the idea behind Sega's new commercial line. Easily the funniest and most brilliant commercials I've ever seen, *Sega Saturn Shiro!* has quickly become the most talked about video game advertising line in Japan's history. Sega had these ad



spots blaring on their main screen between games, giving us tired show troopers a laugh whenever one was needed.



One of the last PC-Engine titles has crossed to yet another platform. This disturbingly cool RPG "trilogy" hit the PlayStation last year, and is now heading for the Saturn. Aside from the improved graphics the last version benefited from, Saturn *Linda 3* will come with a free music CD.

LINDA 3

TOKYO GAME



BLACK MATRIX

In a show where every other game seemed to be of the *Final Fantasy Tactics* variety (turn-based strategy RPGs), *Black Matrix* stood out mainly thanks to its cool themes (Angels! Devils! Seven deadly sins!), amazingly detailed gothic environments (lots of church-like locations) and hot artwork. *Black Matrix* was one of my favorite titles of the Spring Tokyo Game Show, and should be out in Japan this summer.



LUNAR 2: EB

Featuring totally redone graphics, a couple new dungeons and a slightly changed name (look, a "2"), *Lunar 2: Eternal Blue* isn't quite receiving the update *Lunar: The Silver Star* did, but frankly, it doesn't really need it. This remake of a classic will be hitting Japan soon.



SUPER TEMPO

Super Tempo was certainly one of the more surprising Saturn games at the show, and also one of the coolest. This sequel to the 32X platformer not only has incredible animation and playability, but its humor is top notch. Check out the shot below! This looks exceptionally cool...



NINTENDO 64



Nintendo 64

Even though the official Tokyo Game Show poster had a "N64" logo branded in its lower left corner, it was apparent developers either didn't have any Nintendo products to display, or they were just holding them for the Space World show this November. Some of the titles that did make it (which comprised of less than four percent of all games shown) included *Buck Bumblebee*, *Tonic Trouble*, a couple of *Bomberman*-type games and *Choro-Q 64*. The most surprising Nintendo-related product on the show floor had to have been an all-new *Rockman* (*MegaMan*) Super Famicom game. Kinda late, isn't it?



THE SIGHTS OF THE TOKYO GAME SHOW

Okay, Japanese shows are cool. Every booth had tons of babes strutting their stuff, dressed in cool company uniforms and all more than happy to pose for any camera pointed in their direction. The crazy thing was, I saw a ton of people who certainly didn't work for any video game magazine taking pictures like mad. Dirty old men! I, on the other hand, had to take pictures... You know, for this article. Really.



Well, that's it. The Spring Tokyo Game Show is over. It was fun as hell, but I'm glad to be back in the land of pizza and normal TV. I'm sorry we didn't have the room to showcase all the other 423 TGS titles, but if you have any questions concerning specific games or the show in general, please drop me a message at rockhart@gamersrepublic.com. Of course, we'll be back with our comprehensive import section in the next issue. Until then...



SHOW '98 SPRING



田中 秀幸

寺瀬 今日子



大塚 明夫



大塚 明夫



大塚 明夫

METAL GEAR

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE

SECRET REPORT FROM KONAMI HQ... SECRET REPORT FROM KONAMI HQ...

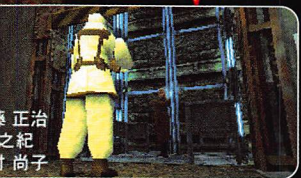
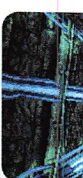
By: Ryan Lockhart

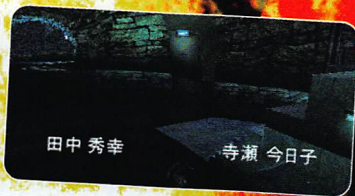
Seek and destroy the terrorist arsenal...

It isn't hard to see exactly why *Metal Gear Solid* is already a classic title, even though there's several months before the U.S. release. On the visual side, the graphics are simply astounding, with no visible pop-up or blinking textures, and a frame rate that rarely drops below the 30fps mark. Of course, a game isn't made on graphics alone, and thankfully, it is in this gameplay department where *MGS* truly shines. Like the *Metal Gear* of old, it's up to you to guide Solid Snake through hordes of enemies, often with nothing more than your wits and a pack of cigarettes. Comparable to the contemporary *Tenchu* (but infinitely more complex), stealth is the name of the game, and you'll only be successful if you can avoid as many enemies, searchlights, and security cameras as

Fighting your enemies is not the key to success! Use stealth and surprise to infiltrate the enemy command!

possible. Of course, sometimes luck won't hold out and you'll be trapped, making combat inevitable. For this, *Metal Gear Solid* has over 20 weapons, which can be used to blast away baddies in all sorts of creative ways. You also have over 30 items at your disposal (well, once you find them), including the basic health packs, underwater breathing apparatus and night vision goggles. Items and weapons can also be

正治
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堀 之紀
中村 尚子藤本 譲
麻生 智久



SOLID ACTION

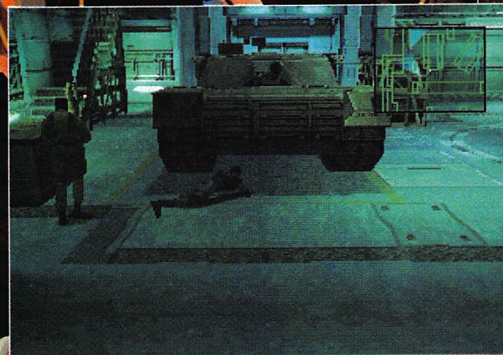


combined at times, allowing for such cool hybrids as a night vision sniper rifle. *Metal Gear Solid* should also have one hell of a storyline, with over 20 characters, tons of game graphic cinemas, over eight hours of voice acting and two different endings...

The experience...

When I first saw a video of *Metal Gear Solid* in motion at last year's E3, I couldn't believe my eyes, and a small part of me knew I was looking at a game that wasn't running on PlayStation hardware. I mean, if Sony's machine could move that detailed of an environment without any apparent problems, why wasn't everyone making games like that? And, being skeptical and all, I was really looking forward to the Spring Tokyo Game Show, where a

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



The Return of Solid Snake was inevitable...

Allow me to introduce to you.....

AWESOME REAL-TIME GRAPHICS AND AN ATMOSPHERIC SOUNDTRACK SET THE SCENE...

Metal Gear Solid's introduction is comparable to the original *Final Fantasy*, in which you have to complete a "quest" in order to start the actual game. Seen here are bits of the first introduction, which has you breaking into an underground warehouse. This is just a training stage, however, and the title credits don't begin to roll until you make it into the elevator located on the other side of this area.





The ultimate spy action game displayed in real-time with amazing polygonal characters, backgrounds and shadows!

The Metal Gear Masterpiece is back!



a playable version would be unveiled. Now, after playing it a bit at the show, then joining a few other members of the press for a private showing at KCEI, I can safely say I'll never doubt Konami's games again.

After months of staring at screenshots and watching that damned video over and over, I finally got to play *Metal Gear Solid*. I finally got to hold a dual shock controller in my hand, and guided Solid Snake through an updated, but still-familiar territory. I fired off a Sniper Rifle that had an incredible zoom, I disguised myself as a box and I even lit up a cigarette and watched my life bar slowly drop (just like in real life!). And I walked away from that experience an extremely excited and

happy man.

Let's start with the obvious part, the graphics. Imagine a game with so many little details, you could play it through ten times and never notice all of them. And some of the more apparent details, like the snow slowly falling towards earth, the clouds moving overhead, your footprints etching into the snow and the guard's breath crystallizing in the cold air, are so impressive that Solid was killed numerous times by me just stopping and staring at the visuals. And the fact that the entire background was visible at all times (meaning there was no fog, pop-up or apparent hiding), made the level itself the most impressive graphical aspect.

The wait will soon be over! Experience the awesome 3D CG entertainment!

The camera angle is normally overhead to give you a wide view of the action, but will quickly switch to other angles when there's something of interest (like a security camera overhead), if you press yourself against a wall (to give you a view of what's beyond the corner) and there's also a first-person mode (when you hide under objects and scenery). The first-person view mode can also be selected at any time to give you a better look at your surroundings, along with granting you the name of any items that might be in your line of site. You can't move around in this mode though.

Okay, onto the gameplay. Fans of the original *Metal Gear* titles won't be disappointed, as this new update features many of the same mechanics as the classics. There's plenty of places to hide, and anything that looks like it could be used to conceal yourself most likely can. I threw myself into (and under) a truck, into an air vent, I even ducked down inside a guard post. Solid Snake himself can duck, crawl, press up against walls, swim, sneak and run (just to name the basics), and even though *MGS* was dual shock compatible (which madly vibrated whenever I was noticed), I found myself using the digital pad more (it seemed a little more natural for some reason).

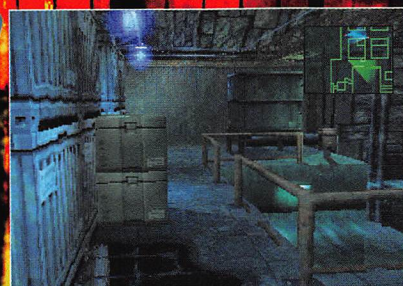
To make it easier to move around undetected, you have a small radar screen in the upper right hand corner that gives you both your (and any nearby guard's) line of sight. As with the original, when a guard

sees you, the familiar exclamation ("!") sign jumps up and he begins to give chase. This lasts around ten seconds (a timer pops up replacing your radar screen), and if you can hide quickly enough, you can avoid any actual combat. If combat is necessary, you can utilize everything from hand-to-hand fighting to a remote guided missile launcher. The coolest trick I achieved was to knock one guard down, and then use his body as a shield against incoming bullets. You can also use the environments against the enemies,

like standing against a wall and tapping it to entice a guard to move away from his normal patrol, or make an enemy follow your footprints in the snow, leading him into a trap of your liking.

The version we played unfortunately only had two levels, a training stage and the first part of

the Alaskan base. The training stage was quite cool, placing you in a warehouse, where you can practice your newfound abilities on the guards roaming around before taking an elevator up, and starting the actual game. The Alaskan base entrance was much more involving, with searchlights and cameras to worry about (aside from the numerous guards). Mr. Hideo Kojima, the genius behind *Metal Gear Solid*, stated we had only seen about one 50th the game at that point, and we should expect at least ten hours of gameplay if you know exactly where to go (and much longer if not). In comparison, *Resident Evil 2* would take you between two to three hours in similar circumstances.



This is only the first of a series of *Metal Gear Solid* updates. Next month expect a larger article, not only covering the basics of the *Metal Gear* universe, but in-depth looks at upcoming levels, more information on weapons and items, and an introduction to the friends and foes you'll be meeting later this year. See you then!

First of a series of Metal Gear Solid updates. Next month expect a lar

anime republic



Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge

Night Warriors:
Darkstalkers Revenge - Volume 1
English Dubbed Version
45min.
Available this June 23 from VIZ Video
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON

Popular Japanese-bred Fighting games (containing inspired art and storylines) making their way to the world of anime is a match made in heaven. With a (usually) clever plot already at hand, character designs completed and an installed base of loyal fans in place, an anime director has a head start not to be squandered. So far in the genesis of this genre we've seen a mixed bag of results. At the high end of the scale (in a pool that includes *Fatal Fury*, *GoKaiser*, *Samurai Shodown*, *Toshinden*, *Virtua Fighters*, *Street Fighter*, and soon *Tekken*) lies VIZ Video's U.S. release of *Darkstalkers*.

Brought to life by acclaimed director Masashi Ikeda, continuity among the ensemble cast of *Darkstalkers* is achieved by jumping from character to character as they make their way



night warriors: dark stalkers' revenge



anime republic

through various scenarios revolving around our world (robbed of the light by the Darkstalkers) and the Demon World. Dimitri has been exiled to Earth for 100 years after his defeat in the Demon World and has been preparing for his revenge. Feasting on human souls for strength, his time has come as the story begins to unfurl. Morrigan is living in the Demon World as a member of the royal family and wants nothing more than a good fight (a request which Dimitri is happy to oblige). Felicia, the youngest Darkstalker, who has

(continued)





grown up mainly among humans (raised in a convent by her recently deceased sister) is a dancer in a musical. She uses her powers once (to help Lord Raptor out of a jam) but seems rather tame otherwise. She appears resistant of the Darkstalkers' bloodline. Lord Raptor is masquerading as a speed metal rocker who gets his audience's motors running with some shredd-tastic tunes and then sucks their souls. A team of deadly monks armed with silver bullets and flame throwers attend the show on this night and

attempt to barbecue his dead bones. Of course, they're all sucked dry. Donovan and Anita come in at the tail end of part one after Dimitri and Morrigan's battle is interrupted by swarming Phobos robots. Donovan is fighting his Dark side (he's half human) and is a stalwart enemy of all things evil, swearing he is a vampire hunter. Anita follows him for the simple reason of seeing him fail. She does not believe that he can fight his dark blood, as humans are so weak. This quiet, haunting young girl (the survivor of many Darkstalkers attacks) seems like she may play an integral role in the episodes ahead.

If the first episode is any indication, *Darkstalkers* will likely become one of this year's most sought after titles and could be the

Neon Genesis Evangelion genesis 0:11

English Dubbed Version

60 min.

Available now from A.D. Vision

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON



It is hard for me to come to terms with the fact that *Evangelion* is winding down. But alas, like all good things, *Evangelion* must come to an end. Just look at *Seinfeld*... Ha! Like I care.

In *Genesis 0:11*, we get a taste of life prior to *2nd Impact* (1999) and witness the coming together of Shinji's mother (Yui Ikari) and Father (then Gendo Rokubungi). A

University scientist, professor Fiutski's brilliant student Yui (a gifted bio-chemist, sweet and innocent) is intrigued by the somewhat unstable Gendo (a troublesome young man who Fiutski tries to advise to no avail), and they begin dating. Jump to the year 2001, after the 2nd Impact and Fiutski is shocked when he discovers that not only has Gendo survived (he was supposedly in Antarctica) but he's now married to Yui and... they have a son, Shinji. Fiutski suspects that Gendo married Yui for her biochemistry background...

The U.N. declared that the 2nd Impact was caused by a giant meteor hitting Antarctica, but Fiutski is convinced of a cover up and soon discovers...

(continued below)



Evangelion



neon genesis evangelion



finest video game-based anime produced to date. The animation quality is high, the art is spectacular and vibrantly colored (especially for such a dark theme)

and the English dub, while not perfect, is very good. The moves in the movie are exact replicas of those in the game, and the art is simply breathtaking. So far, this is an opportunity not squandered but celebrated.

ers his suspicions correct. Fiutski confronts Gendo, and so Gendo shows him the massive underground geo-front that has been sustaining life on earth. The amazed Fiutski now joins Gendo in his crusade to begin a new Genesis for mankind. Yui then mysteriously dies in a freak accident and shortly thereafter we meet Rei for the first time. Gendo says she's the child of an acquaintance... however, she is the spitting image of Yui. I smell a clone. Soon after, the fog begins to lift as we discover Gendo's affair with Dr. Ikagi (creator of the MAI system that controls all walks of life in the geo-front) as young Rei reveals to the good Doctor that Gendo used her to kill Yui. In a psychotic rage, Dr. Ikagi seemingly murders Rei and then takes her own life. The Gern project (Dr. Ikagi's project) is halted and NERV, under the direct command of Gendo Ikari is formed.

Pretty deep for a cartoon, right? Of course, this is only a small piece of the puzzle unraveled in *Genesis 0:11*. We also find out the real story behind Osca's twisted existence, and witness her complete mental breakdown before unit 2, piloted by Rei, pulls the Lance of Longines out of Adam's very heart to destroy an Angel... which is penetrating Osca's mind! Okay, if you don't watch *Evangelion*, you probably think I'm nuts, but followers can rest assured that we are definitely getting into the meaty parts! I'm quite sure every-



excellent time to purchase all 11 and watch them back-to-back. If you never watch another anime (but you will), don't miss *Evangelion* (Also check back with me next month, I'll have a big announcement!)



destroy all monsters

Destroy All Monsters

English Dubbed/ Live Action

90 min.

Available in May from A.D. Vision

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON

Transcending time... Monster Island, home to such notorious Tokyo mashers as Mothra, Rodan, Anguirus, Gorosaurus, Kumonga, Manda, Minilla (Godzilla's son), Baragon, Varan, and of course this summer's biggest movie star, Godzilla. All is well until a band of silver-clad effeminate alien invaders discover a way to command the entire monster armada and in an effort to move in on our planet, turn the whole lot of them into psychotic behemoths. Breaking out of the sanctuary, they threaten the very world we live in!! The time is right to call in Japanese monster movie mainstay Akira Kubo and company to fire up the cheese-ball action and kick some alien ass!!

Rubber suits and miniature cities never looked so good as in A.D.V.'s soon-to-be-released *Destroy all Monsters!* Available on home video for the very first time, this king of camp is a slice of B-movie bliss no one should be without. Released in theaters across Japan in 1968, DAM makes it's U.S. debut with an excellent English dub, is digitally mastered with hi-fi stereo sound, and comes in the original letterbox format.

Godzilla's billowing cry summoned me to the TV as a kid. Watching detailed miniature after detailed miniature topple at the feet of the convincing rubber-clad giant monsters is an indelible memory of vintage effects movies. Digitally re-mastered, the video looks so crisp, that I have a difficult time believing it is 30 years old. A splendid release by A.D.V., I can't recommend *Destroy all Monsters* highly enough. It's the greatest all-star monster battle ever filmed!



wrath of the ninja

Wrath of the Ninja

English Dubbed Version

87 minutes

Available this June from U.S. Manga

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON



I have mixed feelings on the dubbing, but otherwise *Wrath of the Ninja* is an excellent Ninja Tale for those intrigued by such. *Wrath* has that distinct late 80s character design (which in my opinion can look a little to realistic sometimes) and a very strong storyline. Thankfully, *Wrath* is packed with demons! The strong action sequences and supernatural overtones are where *Wrath* really shines. Blood sprays, depth blurring, & pyrotechnic effects seldom look better than these. Also prevalent is the soundtrack which plays almost constantly throughout. Where there's action there is well orchestrated music. The story is set in 1580 and revolves around the unholy armies of Lord Nobunaga

Oda and the young female Ninja, Ayame, who wants him dead. Having barely escaped the slaughter of her clan, she is joined by fellow warriors Sakon and Ryoma and together they set out to fulfill the prophecy at the center of the story. Action and adventure tales seldom encompass this many twists and turns in the storyline, and the animation is very good overall; at times simply brilliant. Almost none of the usual suspect short-



cuts were taken in the animation of this film. *Wrath* is a finely produced 90 minutes of anime and although the dubbing is only suitable at times, overall I highly recommend it.

landlock

Landlock

English Dubbed

45 min.

Available Now from Manga Video

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON

With *Landlock*, featuring character designs by world-renowned Masamune Shirow (creator of *Ghost in the Shell*), Manga Video is hoping to grab some of the large *Ghost* audience for a second turn through anime land. But does the rest of *Landlock*



live up to the name of its esteemed character designer?

Ghost drew in fans from all walks of life and like 89's *Akira* is responsible for making Anime in America a little bit bigger than it was before. Of course *Landlock* is not nearly as enterprising a project as *Ghost* or *Akira*, and probably had a fragment of the budget. This is not, nor was it meant to be, the second coming of *Ghost in the Shell*, so don't get your hopes up too high in terms of a forthcoming global anime revolution. Anime aficionados will undoubtedly flock to *Landlock* as it is a high quality two part "techno-



mystical action adventure" in a year where so far only a handful of standout series (or features for that matter) have become available, so Manga's timing couldn't be better.

Landlock's intriguing storyline (involving a young man; Luda, who inherits his murdered father's power over the wind) is its second strong point after the Masamune Shirow affiliation. Anime in gener-

ally seldom embodies complex plot twists and character development, but in *Landlock's* case, quality animation and excellent design are surrounded by a story that will hold your attention even when things aren't blowing up.

The story takes place in the fantastical land of Zaul where an evil tyrant; Zanark, is attempting to thrust the world into darkness. To consummate his evil plan, he enlists the most unlikely of assassins to murder Luda's father; a powerful man who has those mystical wind abilities. While this in itself may sound shallow and pre-conceived, it blossoms into a solid plot line chock full of revenge, nobility, and twisted bloodlines. As heralded, the art is beautiful, from the Kusanagi-like female forms to the inspired backdrops and architecture.

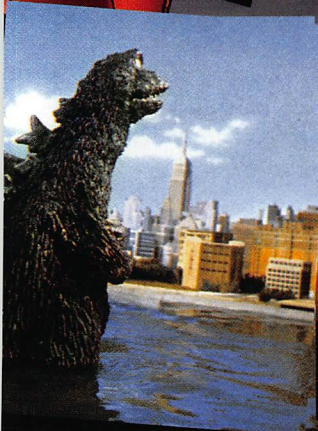
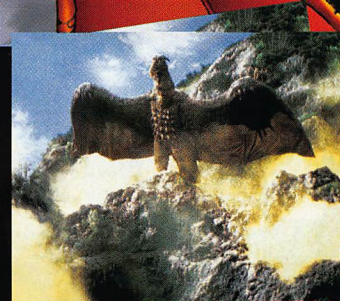
Landlock is a joy to behold and maintains a level of animation quality well above the norm. However, detracting somewhat from the overall presentation is a rather uninspired English dub, but otherwise consider *Landlock, Part 1* highly recommended. Part two should prove even better as one succeeds in revealing the treacherous line of deceit which should play out like an episode of *Melrose Place* from hell. Now I'll bet you can hardly wait!



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Dirty Pair Flash Act 1

English Dubbed Version

60 min.

Available now from A. D. Vision

REVIEWED BY MELANIE MELTON



Based on the novels by Haruka Takachiho, with character designs by Takahiro Kimura, *Dirty Pair* gives us a vision of an apocalyptic future coupled with two clueless junior agents of the World Welfare and Works Agency. A tag team of trouble? A recipe for disaster? Indeed! This particular testosterone fest offers plenty of 'destruction and disaster in C-cup heaven'. Yuri comes off as the feminine, eye-batting, date-crazy one and Kei is your typical gun-toting tomboy. They're an odd couple... and a dirty pair (I couldn't resist). It seems that wherever they go, people get hurt and things have a tendency of blowing up.

Now let's get to the meat of the first episode's story, shall we? I'm afraid we're looking at spareribs and I do mean "spare." When a dying man gives the vacationing Yuri (she's playing hooky) a secret computer card, all of a sudden it's as if the whole of the Tokyo underground is after her. Luckily she runs across Yuri and passes the buck. And so goes the episode back and forth as both girls bitch and moan about exactly how (and who) is going to get the card to Police HQ. Personality development was obviously not a priority in this one as the only reason to watch is for the sex appeal factor. Fan service is guaranteed with plenty of shredded clothing, pushup bustiers and a "flashy" costume change scene (where did they get those bracelets? I want one!). In the end however, all you see is two young girls being chased through a city, fighting terrorism (with more terrorism) and causing major property damage. Wanton destruction? Or just good dirty fun? You be the judge. Chances are if you're into the



Dirty Pair you've seen the subtitled version, but if you only buy dubbed *DP Flash* is all new to you. The animation is standard TV quality (Japanese TV mind you) and the dub is of the usual high ADV standard. The inspired design for the box really caught my eye, but in the end *Dirty Pair Flash Act 1* will only appeal to that young male audience that craves to see scantily-clad babes in action.

dirty pair

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dragonballz the movie

Dragonball Z The Movie:**The Tree of Might****Special Features:**

- Language Selection (English or Japanese)
- English closed-caption • English Subtitles
- Character info & DBZ Quiz
- Video library • Available Now

REVIEWED BY MELANIE MELTON



Everybody was Kung Fu fighting (as usual)... *Tree* begins a little slow, but quickly gains momentum. Super swift blows are exchanged in the continuing martial arts/adventures of Son Goku and company. In this episode, The Tree of Might is planted on the fertile Earth by a band of space pirates. In order to sustain itself, the tree drains energy from the planet, resulting in the Earth eventually becoming a barren, lifeless planet. Don't you just hate space pirates? In an attempt to destroy the Tree of Might, Goku and crew engage in a brawl with these extra-terrestrial raiders. But, surprise! Turles (the space pirate) is a Saiyan just like Goku and Gohan. What ensues is a free-for-all between Turles and Goku to destroy the tree. But The Tree of Might isn't your everyday garden variety. Fruit from the tree (which looks gross by the way) increases one's power and Turles has just taken a big bite.

Dragonball Z: The Tree of Might provides a fluid storyline and enough action and drama to grab the attention of any martial arts or action/adventure fan. This is a fun series to watch because of the unique mix of intense action, drama and humor. The Animation is high OAV quality and as usual, Pioneer turns in another inspired English dub. I prefer subtitles (they provide a better, more original feel for the characters) but as dubs go this one is passable. Besides the usual DVD goodies, *DBZ* comes with cool quiz and a video library. *The Tree of Might* is good stuff! Keep it coming, Pioneer.



Based on the Japanese legend "The Monkey King", and the creativity of Akira Toriyama, *Dragonball* is one of the most popular and best-selling anime/manga series in Asia and Europe. The premise: Saiyans have taken the world by force and driven DBZ fans to "another dimension". I'm sure most are familiar with the storyline: whoever collects all seven dragonballs will be granted one wish by the eternal dragon, Shen-Ron. Hmm, I think I'd wish for... WORLD DOMINATION!! Anyway...

**Tenchi the Movie 2:****Daughter of Darkness****Special Features:** • Interactive Menu's

- English and Japanese 5.1 Dolby Digital Surround tracks
- English & Japanese subtitles
- English captioning • Theatrical Trailer
- Hidden angle video: Bonus production materials

REVIEWED BY MELANIE MELTON

I'll begin by saying that as far as picture quality goes, you'll be hard pressed to find any animated feature that looks as clear and sharp as *Tenchi the Movie 2*. But the big question is... can darkness be in love with light, without one enveloping the other?

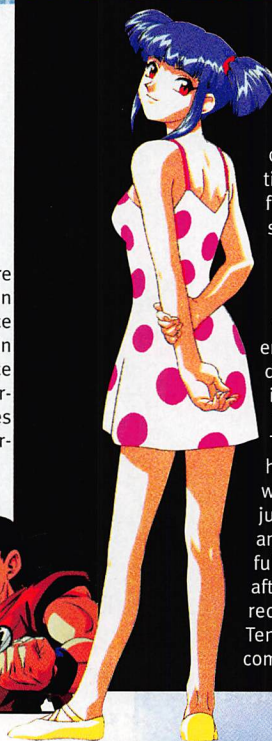
Daddy's little girl (or so she says) has her eyes set on Tenchi and that's got the girls in Tenchi's household raging with envy. Coming home from the temple, Tenchi acquires yet another female house guest. Wait! Is that Tenchi's Lighthawk Sword in the girl's hand? Who is this girl, Mayuka? Is she really Tenchi's daughter? And what's happening with the recent time/space continuum disturbances?

After some research, we discover that indeed Mayuka is Tenchi's daughter. Strangely however, the mother's side of the DNA has been purposely distorted. In any case, Tenchi whole heartily accepts Mayuka to the extended family. Meanwhile, the time/space continuum has been warped. Watching these event in delight, Yuzuha, demoness of darkness, decides this would be a good time to play out a 700 year grudge on Yoshia by using Mayuka as bait to tempt Tenchi into the



Dimension of Darkness. Just another day in anime land.

I was most impressed with this offering. The animation quality is very fluid, and it's easy to see why Tenchi is such a popular series throughout a wide sector of anime viewers. There is enough action, comedy, and romance to intrigue male and female adult viewers. Tenchi practically has his own harem going with all those girls! It's just one fiasco after another with a house full of beautiful girls after one guy. A definite recommendation for Tenchi fans and newcomers alike.



Fire Emblem

Subtitled Version

Length: 60 minutes

Available Now from A. D. vision

**REVIEWED BY MELANIE MELTON**

Fire Emblem, based on Nintendo's Strategy RPG born on the Super Famicom, comes to the U.S. anime scene courtesy of A.D.Vision. With this excellent anime and soon a 64 DD game under its belt, *Fire Emblem* is fast becoming a hot property. Lets hope the DD game comes over as quickly as the anime did...

The story begins in a time before recorded history began, in a place called Saint Akanea, founded by the great hero, Anri. It was a tranquil place to live, but darkness will not let light shine gloriously bright for long. The gods of madness, discord, and war stir the spirits of men to create havoc. And so the story begins and an anime is born! Surrounded on all sides by seven allied nations, the story plays out like a biblical war epic of yesterday. There's a solid storyline here including some excellent character development as Mars, the son of Anri finds his bravery and honor when his female comrade's (Princess Sheida) fathers life and kingdom are put in peril. Eventually all is lost and the land plunges into darkness, and from here the child learns his path of life and continues his quest. The second act opens strong and it never lets up to long between high drama or action.

The storyline and characters really peaked my interest. Prince Mars takes royal strides growing from a young prince to his own kind of king, different from his father, but true to the bloodline. He's heroic, generous, thoughtful, and only does what he deems necessary. The adventurous Princess Sheida is interesting as well as is the rest of the main cast.

(continued below)

fire emblem



The animation is above average for the most part, but excellent when it matters. Like many a modern anime, more care is taken in the key action scenes while less emphasis is placed on dialogue-intensive sequences. One becomes engrossed by the tale of the treachery and the drape of mystery that is portrayed, despite initially confusing flashbacks, and blurring effects add to the later storyline twists. The color is vibrant and the art is very detailed. Interesting characters and storylines combine to produce an epic anime.

Coming next month:

Pioneer's English dubbed 18 episode *El Hazard*; *The Wanderers*, fresh from Japanese TV, is one of the best anime compilations available today. Next month we'll have an in-depth look at the entire series, featuring some of the craziest anime you'll ever see or hear! There's a whopping 425 minutes of it!



plus;
Darkstalkers vol. 2
Evangelion: Genesis 0:12
Blood Reign: Curse of the Yoma
New Kimagure: Orange Road
Peacock King 3
and more!

**A new enemy
threatens the Earth!**

**Uncut
Original
Movie!**

DRAGONBALL Z

THE WORLD'S STRONGEST THE MOVIE

**The Mad Dr. Wheelo died,
but his brain lives on; now
he wants to take over the
body of the strongest
fighter in the world!**

VHS Dubbed - \$19.98 SRP

VHS Subtitled - \$24.98 SRP

DVD - \$29.98 SRP

Laserdisc - \$29.98 SRP

Approx. 60 min.
running time

Gee...guess who
he picked.

**Eagerly awaited by hardcore
Anime fans Everywhere!**



FUNimation
Productions Inc.

**Not shown on TV!
No Pay per View!**



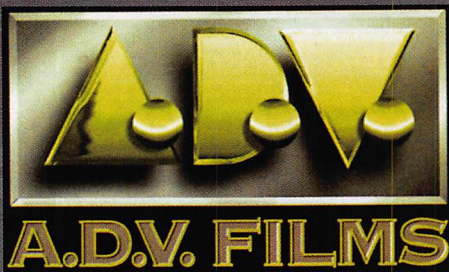
PIONEER
The Art of Entertainment

Call Pioneer Customer Service at 800-421-1621 for more
information or checkout our new website:
www.pioneeranimation.com

Pioneer Anime products are available from these
and other fine video and comic book retailers:



All Dragon Ball Z Logos, Images, And characters
© 1998 BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION Licensed
by FUNimation Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



The Gamers' Republic

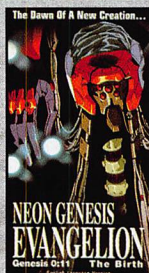
Top Five Anime

presents

Gamers' Republic Editors' Top Five

D. Halverson

1. Evangelion ADV
2. Poltergeist Report US Manga
3. Darkstalkers VIZ
4. LandLock Manga Video
5. Peacock King U.S. Manga



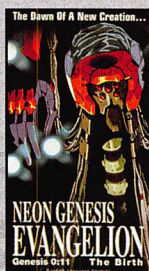
M. Melton

1. Escaflowne
2. Ramna 1/2 VIZ
3. Slayers Software Sculptures
4. El hazard Pioneer
5. Dragon Ball Z VIZ



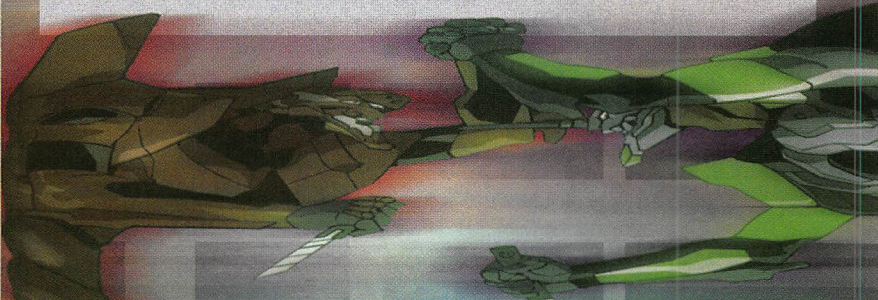
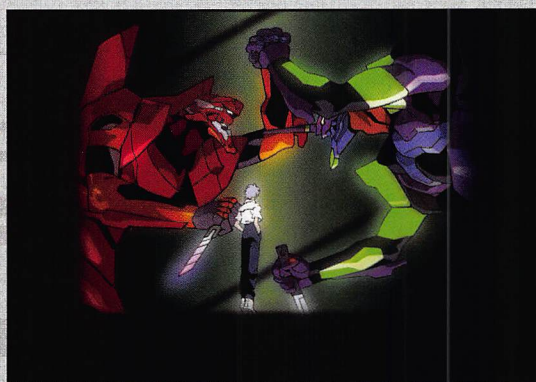
R. Lockhart

1. Evangelion ADV
2. Goldenboy ADV
3. Macross Plus Manga Video
4. Gunsmith Cats ADV
5. Darkstalkers VIZ



Gamers' Republic Readers' Top Five

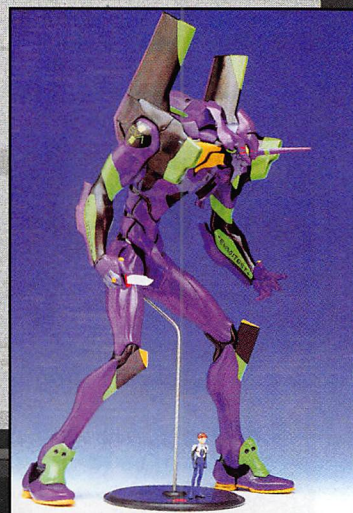
1. TO BE DETERMINED...
2. TO BE DETERMINED...
3. TO BE DETERMINED...
4. TO BE DETERMINED...
5. BY YOU!



Top Five Anime Contest!

To enter the ADV/Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime Contest, simply send us a list of your favorite five anime, new or old. Make sure to include your name, address and age and send it to: **Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361.** First prize is Shinji's EVA-01 (which stands over 20" inches tall) and Evangelion 1 through 12!! Second Prize: Any two ADV releases and an ADV T-Shirt. Third Prize: Any 1 ADV release. All three winners receive a GR subscription. For your free ADV catalog (and this is one cool catalog) write to: **AD Vision, 5750 Blintiff #217, Houston, TX 77036.**

No purchase necessary, void where prohibited, not responsible for lost or damaged luggage, objects in mirror may be closer than they appear.



CODEX REPUBLICA

PART OF ANY VIDEO GAMER'S ENTERTAINMENT STEMS FROM THE COMPLETION AND SUBSEQUENT PILLAGING OF EVERY OUNCE OF GAMEPLAY A TITLE HAS TO OFFER. WE URGE YOU TO UTILIZE OUR TRIED AND TESTED CODES SECTION WHERE SOME OF THE FINEST TITLES ARE RIPPED APART... BEHOLD THEIR SECRETS.



NINTENDO'S 1080° IS ARGUABLY THE BEST SNOWBOARDING GAME OUT THERE. TO MAKE IT EVEN MORE ENTERTAINING, HERE ARE SOME FUN CODES SURE TO BRING A SMILE TO ANYONE'S FROSTY MUG.

Control the Crystal Boarder

THE N64 GETS TO SHOW SOME COOL EFFECTS WITH THIS TRANSPARENT BOARDER. SIMPLY BEAT THE EXPERT MODE WITH ANY CHARACTER. ON YOUR NEXT GAME, HIGHLIGHT AKARI. WHEN HER STATS ARE UP, PRESS C-LEFT AND THEN A TO SELECT HER. ON THE BOARD SELECT SCREEN, THE CRYSTAL BOARDER'S HEAD SHOULD BE IN PLACE OF AKARI'S.

Control the Metal Boarder

TO ACCESS THIS GOLDEN-ROD OF A BOARDER, BEAT THE EXPERT MODE WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED CRYSTAL BOARDER. NOW, HIGHLIGHT KENSUKE AND PRESS C-UP THEN A WHILE HIS STATS ARE ON SCREEN. THE METAL BOARDER'S CHROMIUM DOME SHOULD BE THERE ON THE BOARD SELECT SCREEN.

Control the Panda Boarder

TO CONTROL THE CUTE PANDA BOARDER (IT IS ACTUALLY JUST ROB WITH A BIG PANDA HEAD ON), CLEAR OUT NINTENDO'S EAD INITIALS FROM THE CONTEST AND TRICK ATTACK MODES. THEN, HIGHLIGHT ROB AND PRESS C-RIGHT THEN A ON HIS STATS SCREEN. THE BIG PANDA HEAD SHOULD BE ON THE BOARD SELECT SCREEN. THE PANDA BOARDER ALSO HAS A FEW NEW TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE- FRONT AND BACK FLIPS AND THE PANDA TWEAK.

Get the Penguin Board

SIMPLY COMPLETE ALL 24 TRICKS IN THE TRAINING MODE. WHEN YOU'RE AT THE BOARD SELECT SCREEN, BRING UP THE STATS ON THE TAHOE 151. PRESS C-DOWN THEN A AND VOILA, YOU'RE RACING ON THE BACK OF SOME POOR PENGUIN.

Watch Ghost During Demo

COMPLETE ANY COURSE IN TIME ATTACK MODE. SAVE YOUR GHOST. ON THE TITLE DEMO, WAIT FOR KENSUKE'S RUN TO END. AT LENGTH, YOUR GHOST RUN SHOULD PLAY AS THE DEMO.

Yoshi's Story

THE TIME IS NIGH MORE FRUITY FUN WITH NINTENDO'S ADORABLE YOSHI'S STORY

Play with the Stage Select Screen

PRESS THE C-LEFT OR C-RIGHT BUTTONS TO ROTATE THE DISPLAY OR PRESS R OR Z TO ZOOM IN AND OUT.

Select Yoshi's color in Practice mode

SELECT ANY COURSE UNDER TRIAL MODE. SELECT THE DESIRED YOSHI BEGIN THE TRIAL MODE. QUIT OUT BY PRESSING START + Z. PRESS B TO GO BACK TO THE MODE SELECT SCREEN AND BEGIN PRACTICE MODE WITH THAT COLOR. FANTABULOUS YOSHI COLOR SELECTIONS ARE NOW YOURS.

Commit Yoshi-cide

PRESS Z + L + A + B

BLACK YOSHI EGG LOCATIONS

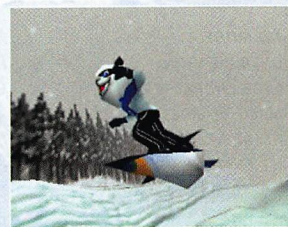
2-1 ...RIGHT AFTER YOU PASS WARP 4, EAT THE TULIP AND SHOOT STRAIGHT UP TO THE PLATFORM ON THE RIGHT. TOSS AN EGG AT THE "?" BUBBLE AND TAKE THE BLACK EGG TO THE END OF THE LEVEL.

2-2 ...HEAD RIGHT UNTIL YOU REACH THE ROOM WITH THE SWINGING VINES. SWING YOUR WAY ALL THE WAY TO THE RIGHT AND POP THE "?" BUBBLE IN THE LITTLE CAVERN.

White Yoshi Egg locations

3-2 ...AS YOU APPROACH THE FIRST LEAF, DROP DOWN. HEAD LEFT UNDERNEATH THE BIG SPRING AND SHOOT THE "?" BUBBLE. TAKE THE WHITE EGG TO THE END OF THE LEVEL.

3-3 ...AFTER PASSING WARP 3, TAKE THE NEXT TWO UPPER VASES. KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU REACH THE PIPES AND GO INTO THE TALL RED ONE. YOU'LL FIND THE OTHER WHITE EGG.



1080° Snowboarding

Need for Speed III



THIS FANTASTIC SEQUEL HAS ALL MANNER OF CRAZY CODES FOR YOU TO SCREW AROUND WITH. ENJOY!
NOTE: ALL CODES ARE INPUTTED IN THE USER NAME ENTRY SCREEN

All cars, all standard tracks
SPOILT

Additional camera angles
SEEALL

Bonus tracks

ENTER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NAMES AT THE OPTIONS' SCREEN, THEN SELECT THE SINGLE RACE OPTION TO RACE ON THE CORRESPONDING TRACK.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CODE
THE ROOM	TOY CAR TRACK	PLAYTM
CAVERNS	UNDERGROUND TRACK	XCAV8
AUTO CROSS	CANYON TRACK	XCNTRY
SPACE RACE	SPACE STATION	MNBEAM
SCORPIO-7	UNDERWATER TRACK	GLDFSH
EMPIRE CITY	BONUS TRACK	MCITYZ

Bonus cars

ENTER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NAMES AT THE OPTIONS' SCREEN, THEN SELECT THE SINGLE RACE OPTION TO RACE WITH THE CORRESPONDING CAR.

CAR	CODE
JAGUAR XJR-15	1JAGX
MERCEDES BENZ CLK GTR	AMGMRC
EL NIÑO SUPERCAR	ROCKET



Pitfall 3D

ARE YOU JUST NOT THRILLED WITH YOUR PURCHASE OF PITFALL 3D? HERE ARE SOME CODES TO PUT A LITTLE JOY BACK INTO YOUR LIFE.

Original Pitfall

TO PLAY MINI-GAME OF THE ORIGINAL PITFALL, ENTER CRANESBABY AT THE PASSWORD SCREEN.

Big Head Harry

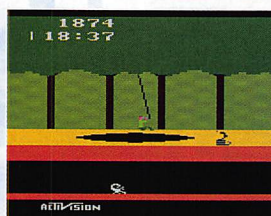
ENTER BIGHEADHARRY AS A PASSWORD. NOW, HARRY HAS A BIG HEAD. THAT'S FUN.

Ninety-nine lives

STEVECRANEME

Flying mode

ZEROGHARRY



Cheat mode

HOLD F1 WHILE TYPING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CODES DURING GAME PLAY TO ACTIVATE THE CORRESPONDING CHEAT FUNCTION.

GOD MODE	MUKOR
SUPER WEAPON	DEDLY
LARGE CHARACTER	GOLRG
SMALL CHARACTER	BTINY
ENEMIES PAUSED	SILKY
KILL ENEMIES	PEACE

Cheat mode

PRESS ENTER DURING GAME PLAY, TYPE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CODES, AND PRESS ENTER AGAIN TO ACTIVATE THE CORRESPONDING CHEAT FUNCTION.

MINERALS AND GAS INCREASED BY 10,000	SHOW ME THE MONEY
FASTER BUILDING AND INSTANT UPGRADES	OPERATION CWAL
UNLIMITED PSIONIC ABILITY	THE GATHERING
INDESTRUCTIBLE BUILDINGS AND SHIPS	POWER OVERWHELMING
FULL MAP	BLACK SHEEP WALL
OPPONENT HAS NO PSIONICS	NOGLUES
LOSE GAME	GAME OVER MAN



Die by the Sword

StarCraft



Tekken 3

YOU SHOULD BY NOW BE FAMILIAR WITH ALL MANNER OF CODES FROM NAMCO'S SEMINAL FIGHTER, *TEKKEN 3*. NOT LEAST BECAUSE OUR LITTLE 16 PAGE SUPPLEMENT FEATURED A GREAT SWATHE OF THEM. HOWEVER, OUR TEKKENING FIENDS FAILED TO UNCOVER THE REST OF *TEKKEN 3*'S SECRETS UNTIL AFTER OUR SUPPLEMENT WENT TO PRINT. FORGET RE-COMPLETING *TEKKEN FORCE*; HERE'S HOW YOU OBTAIN THE COOL CHARACTER COSTUMES!

School Outfits for Jin and Ling Xiaoyu

AVAILABLE AFTER LING AND JIN ARE PLAYED A TOTAL OF 50 TIMES (THE QUICKEST WAY TO ACHIEVE THIS IS TO ENTER VERSES MODE, SET THE FIGHT COUNT TO ONE ROUND, AND BATTLE AWAY). KEEP CHECKING THE COSTUME AVAILABILITY BY PRESSING START WHEN SELECTING JIN OR LING. THEY ALSO HAVE THEIR OWN STAGE (USUALLY APPEARING WHEN THE 3P COSTUME IS SELECTED).

Original Anna Outfit and Original Jack Outfit

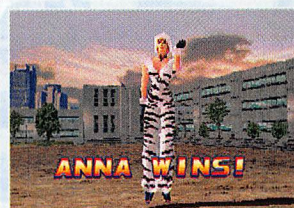
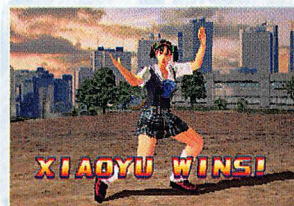
OBTAINED IN ALMOST THE SAME MANNER IS A NATTY WHITE ONE-PIECE ZEBRA-STRIPED OUTFIT FOR ANNA (SELECT AND PLAY AS HER 25 TIMES), WHILE GUNJACK'S OLD ENEMY MAKES AN APPEARANCE ONCE YOU PLAY AS HIM A TOTAL OF TEN TIMES. CHOOSE THESE COSTUMES BY PRESSING START.

Demo Attract Screen Costume Change

PRESS THE L1 BUTTON JUST BEFORE THE REAL-TIME INTRODUCTION BEGINS, AND THE FIGHTERS WEAR THEIR 2P OUTFITS. PRESS R1 AND THE 3P OUTFITS ARE DISPLAYED (FOR THOSE THAT HAVE THEM; THE OTHERS CHANGE CHARACTERS).

Gunjack's Bad and Good Endings.

GUNJACK'S ENDING CHANGES SLIGHTLY AFTER YOU BEAT THE GAME ONCE WITH HIM... HE SURVIVES! REMEMBER TO WATCH IT ALL THE WAY TO THE END...



Age of Empires



PRESS ENTER AND TYPE ONE OF THESE CODES TO ACTIVATE THE CORRESPONDING CHEAT.

FULL MAP	REVEAL MAP
1000 FOOD	PEPPERONI PIZZA
1000 GOLD	COINAGE
1000 WOOD	WOODSTOCK
1000 STONE	QUARRY
REMOVE FOG OF WAR	NO FOG
COMMIT SUICIDE	HARI KARI
ANIMAL CONTROL	GAIA
INSTANT BUILDING	STERIODS
ROCKET LAUNCHER CAR	BIGDADDY
CATAPULTS FIRE PEASANTS OR COWS	JACK BE NIMBLE
NUCLEAR MISSILE TROOPER	E=MC2 TROOPER



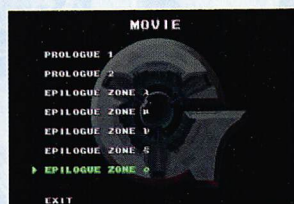
THE TWO PLAYER VERSION OF *DIABLO* IS NOT ONLY THE MOST INVOLVING DUNGEON ROMP SINCE GAUNTLET, BUT IS ALSO THE KEY TO UNLOCKING A RATHER LARGE TREASURE CHEST... SEEK YE UNLIMITED GOLD? THEN FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS...

Unlimited gold

BEGIN GAME PLAY IN MULTIPLAYER MODE AND GIVE ALL GOLD TO ONE CHARACTER. SAVE THE GAME FOR THE CHARACTER WITH THE GOLD, BUT NOT THE OTHER CHARACTER. RESTART THE GAME, AND THE PLAYER THAT WAS NOT SAVED WILL HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF GOLD PRESENT BEFORE GIVING IT TO THE OTHER CHARACTER. REPEAT THIS PROCESS TO BUILD AN UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF GOLD.

6 Darius

WE HAVE A CODE THAT GRANTS YOU ACCESS TO ALL THE GAME'S PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD BE PLAYING *G DARIUS* ALL THE WAY THROUGH AND EARNING THE OPTIONS YOURSELF... GO TO THE OPTIONS SCREEN, HIGHLIGHT "MOVIE", AND INPUT THE FOLLOWING: LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, THEN TAP-IN L1, L2, R1, R2 AND HOLD ALL FOUR BUTTONS. THEN PRESS 0 OR START.



Diablo



Go To: <http://www.gamersrepublic.com>



dotCOM - on-line gaming and Internet assimilation.
By Bryn Williams

OK

By its very nature, video gaming has wholly consumed the Internet over recent years. In its humble beginnings, the Internet provided the ideal medium for computer enthusiasts to swap code, discuss new ideas and create new challenges. In today's web-based society, people recognize the power that the Internet has to offer gamers. There are quite literally thousands of dedicated sites and newsgroups created by professionals and amateurs alike, all purveying their own, unique styles and contents. Each month, dotCOM will strive to bring you the latest news and features from the vast lanes of the Information Super-Highway, so that you, the reader, can get surfing and really appreciate what the net has to offer the avid gamer. This will include all the latest on on-line gaming (games such as *StarCraft*, *Red Alert* and *Quake II* are now a way of life for many), and the coolest sites around for all platforms and gamers of every system.

www.playstation.com

This month, we'll take a look at three sites that caught our collective red-eye. The first up is The Official PlayStation site (www.playstation.com). The index page allows the user to select which continent-based Sony site they wish, and then launches into the main body of the site. Here you will find awesome in-line image maps, representing links to various sub-sections of the site, and through the clever use of Macromedia's Shockwave plug-in (a popular animation language currently taking the net by storm), some really cool interactive sequences can be accessed. For example, a page dedicated to promoting *PaRappa the Rapper* comes alive with exquisite animations and sound thanks to Shockwave. Other games are previewed, such as *Bushido Blade 2*, *Gran Turismo* and others. Also included in the site are features on the Yaroze development kit, along with sample games and information. Indeed, the site's forums for chat and message posting are an excellent place to look for juicy gossip. *The Underground* is a subscribed PlayStation gamezine, allowing the user unrestricted access to all the sites features, and series of PSX demo discs, all for a fee of around \$30.



**Fancy checking for the latest in PlayStation software?
Need your import manuals translated and Nintendo news? Point your browsers here...**

www.phosphors.com

The second site goes by the name of Phosphors (www.phosphors.com). The main reason that this site caught our attention was the fact that the owners are fulfilling a much needed service for all you Japanese console-owning fiends. They take it upon themselves to gather information about the very latest Japanese releases, and then they translate manuals, hint sheets, instructions (etc.), thus making the imported, text-intensive titles more accessible to your average Joe. Currently, there are full translations of *Gran Turismo*'s monstrous manual, *Tenchu*'s instructions and tips and *Xenogears* manuals. Also offered are entire game walkthroughs and links to similar sites. While simple in design and content, this site deserves praise for the work involved, and we can only admire the sterling dedication to gaming that it represents... if you're an import console owner, that is.



www.nintendojo.com



The last site under the microscope this month is Nintendojo (www.nintendojo.com). Full of the latest rumors and facts from the daddy of all video game creators, this site brings some much needed life and interest to the game-starved N64. Good reviews and preview coverage is matched with an excellent balance of Eastern and Western information. A pleasing look and feel make the site a pleasure to surf, and you'll find yourself checking in at the Nintendojo for a regular news-message.

This has been just the tip of the cybernetic iceberg that is the internet. Should you have thoughts, comments, information on sites of interest or any other game-based information, tell us about it...

bwilliams@gamersrepublic.com

Tekken 3

Techno Maniax
Pony Canyon

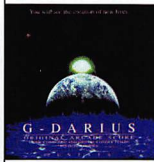


Those seeking cooler remixes of Tekken characters' stage music should prepare for initial disappointment; the 'maniax' in question must be of the 'totally-rewritten-techno-tunes-bearing-extremely-tenuous-resemblance-to-the-game-music' kind. For you see, there's the odd remnants of a few stage tunes (and the odd faint sample smattered here and there), but the majority of the tracks appearing on this album are of a sub-standard techno affair; forgettable the first time around, but gradually working their way into your toe-tapping consciousness. There's the funky New London Jazz Connection's rendition of 'Yoshimitsu'; but the highlight comes at the end with a stomping version of Forest Law (repetitive thumping for three minutes, then the 'uplifting' piano solo winds the track down). Slightly too monotonous, even for techno, but eventually the album tends to win you over in the end. No substitute for the actual arranged in-game tunes, however.

DAVID HODGSON

G-Darius

Zuntata/Hisayoshi Ogura
Zuntata Records



For those familiar with Zuntata, I will simply say that this is among their best work, rivaling the original Ninja Warriors, Darius and RayStorm soundtracks. In the continuing evolution of one the world's greatest video game bands, Zuntata continue to change with the times. Among the familiar synthesizers, synthetic voices, haunting background vocals, and guitar work, we now get a host of new industrial sound effects. For those unfamiliar with Zuntata, think of them as electronica with a classical edge and a sound all their own. Available at finer Japanese retailers, make sure you ask for the original Japanese CD. Do not settle for a Chinese version! There's awesome goodies available in the authentic version.

DAVE HALVERSON

Of course, both the Gamers over at the Republic and your good selves need a little incidental music to warble quietly in the background, or else to get you pumped and peaking for a night on the tiles. We've selected some choice cuts of underground and video game music compilations. The beat goes on...

This month's reviews: Soundtracks from Tekken 3, G-Darius and Yuke Yuke Troublemakers. Albums from DJ Spooky, Craig Armstrong and Sasha & John Digweed.

Yuke Yuke Troublemakers

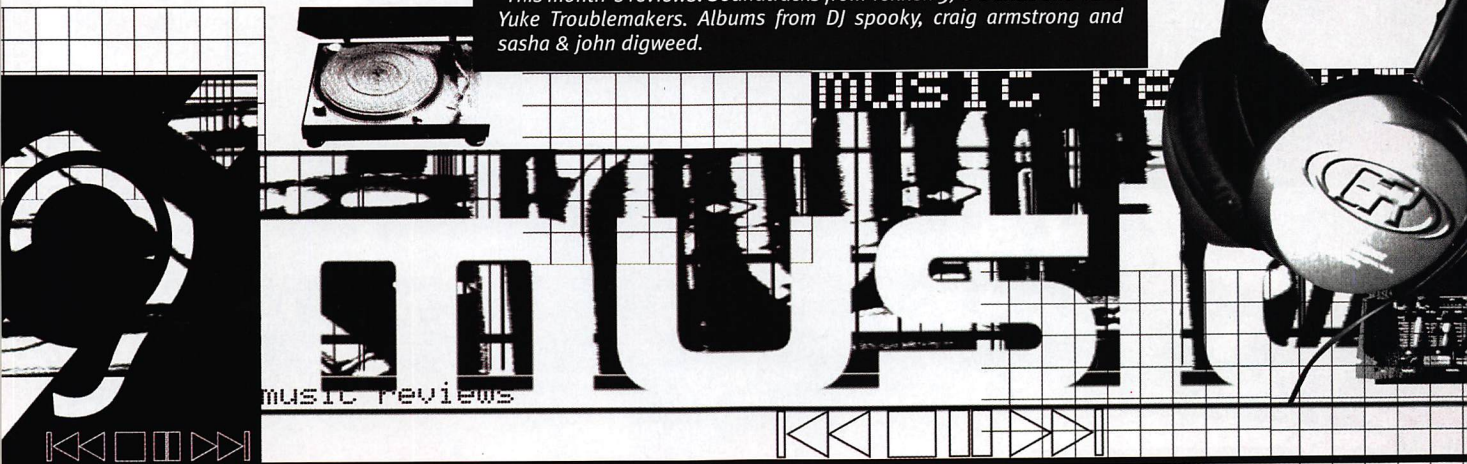
Kazuo Hanzawa for Treasure
TDK records



Why buy a soundtrack to a cartridge game? Those of you with recent memories of Marina the Robo Maid know why. Treasure's music does one thing especially well and that is to lift your spirits.

Especially inspiring are the soundtrack's two opening arranged versions of the game's main themes. If you're stressed out, these will ease the pain. The rest of Yuke's soundtrack borders between whimsical and just plain happy tunes. If you like such utter game nonsense, track down the original Dynamite Headdy soundtrack for a dose of Mega-Drive magic! Both have stellar art books in the original Japanese packaging. Accept no substitutes!

DAVE HALVERSON



Northern Exposure 2: EastCoast Edition

Sasha and John Digweed
Ministry of Sound/Ultra Records

Simply a brilliant album that transcends the usual hit-or-miss nature of mix albums, the Digweed duo have produced an album spanning almost all reaches of club music without restraining themselves from letting one style dominate the tone of the album. Subtle break-beat, trance, house and drum n' bass permeate thru each seamlessly-mixed track. Most notable are tracks from Violet vs Mantronik ('Burn The Elastic') and Frontside ('Dammerung'). Northern Exposure 2 consists of two separate CDs; EastCoast and WestCoast Editions. And while the more beat-oriented WestCoast Edition is proficient, the EastCoast Edition expands the definition of the club sound further. With none of the thirteen tracks any less than truly awe-inspiring, this is a must for the club music aficionado.

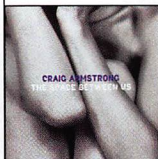
GREG HAN

The Space Between Us

Craig Armstrong
Melankolic

The intriguing debut album from composer and producer Craig Armstrong envelopes listeners into an orchestral cinema. Not surprising from the man who produced Bristol act Massive Attack's album 'Protection' and the 'Romeo and Juliet' soundtrack, Armstrong stretches out haunting compositions that play like a soundtrack for an unwritten movie. Akin to Twin Peaks' composer Angelo Baldamenti, Armstrong's spacious, mysterious songs such as 'Weather Storm' and 'Laura's Theme' invoke a lonely aural landscape. The excellent 'This Love' featuring the ethereal voice of Liz Frasier of Cocteau Twins is reason enough to buy the album. Armstrong and the London Session Orchestra's moving collaboration is for anyone seeking music of quiet intensity. Highly recommended.

GREG HAN



Synthetic Fury EP

DJ Spooky
Asphodel LTD

Spooky's last album, Songs of a Dead Dreamer, was a mesmerizing collage of spaced-out sound waves tucked tightly beneath solid trip-hop beats and sumptuous layers of mellow synth. With Synthetic Fury, Spooky steps away from this chill-out style and enters an aggressive soundscape of powerful rhythms. Take 'Dumb Mutha Fucka' for example, the EP's first full-length entry. 'DMF' is pure, unbridled, hard-core DJ experimentation. It combines two gale-force string samples, mercilessly distorted for effect, with impossibly-synched back beats and acoustic guitar sections, scratched and mixed hard. Not everyone can handle this type of music, but if you dig hard electronic tunes, this inexpensive EP is a cool, hyper-intense hybrid trip-hop experience.

MIKE GRIFFIN





WE'RE GOING TO WAR, SOLDIER!

STARSHIP TROOPERS HITS VIDEO AND DVD!

I will never understand how *Starship Troopers* missed the magic hundred-million dollar mark in its domestic theatrical release (putting any chance for a sequel in peril) when it is easily the most impressive effects movie thus far in the evolution of the genre. This features possibly the world's most gorgeous female (Denise Richards as Carmen Ibanez) in her major motion picture debut, and plays out like an epic war flick of yesteryear all dressed up in a phenomenal futuristic guise. It has everything that legends are made of; brilliant art direction and set design, creature effects, carnage so real it's as if the extras were actually sacrificed, just the right dose of sex and



a young cast of up and comers who gave inspired performances alongside Michael Ironside, a bona fide Sci-Fi icon. The only conclusion I can make is that the residual negative *Show Girls* buzz and bad timing combined to thwart what should have been the next big Science Fiction franchise. Perhaps the DVD release will help boost the numbers. Featured on the disc are five deleted scenes (in a Verhoeven flick that usually means gore and/or sex) several behind the scenes featurettes, commentary track by Verhoeven and writer Ed Neumeier, Dolby 5.1 as well as Dolby Surround Sound (plus defaults to Dolby Surround with Dolby Digital 5.1) and various playback options such as dubs in Spanish and French with English subtitles, and English closed captioning. If you haven't seen *Troopers* for whatever reason and are even the slightest bit into sci-fi epics, you owe it to yourself to pick up this stellar DVD. **DAVE HALVERSON**
Rated R. Available Now on DVD.

CINEMATRIK

From cult movies to blockbusters, film entertainment for the video gamer



DIGITAL VIDEO DISC



TRAINSPOTTING

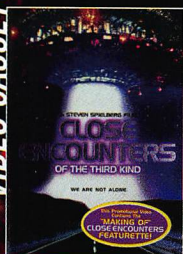
Following the gritty existence of a group of Edinburgh's Herion addicts may not sound like the ideal entertainment recipe, but the way the subject's tackled, the sheer realism of the portrayals and the exceptional acting combine to absorb the viewer into a horrific world of intense degradation, utterly realistic violence and exceptional highs. Full marks for *Full Monty* lead actor Robert Carlyle as the vicious psychopath Begbie, and this coupled with the meticulous treatment of Irvine Welsh's cult book of the same name makes *Trainspotting* a contemporary classic. This DVD offering pales when compared to the Laser Disc version which boasted narration, original voice recordings and deleted scenes.

DAVID HODGSON

Rated R.

Available Now on DVD.

VIDEO CASSETTE



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION

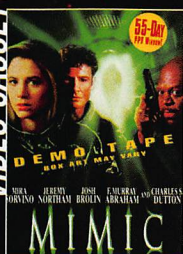
If you haven't seen this classic of Sci-Fi, now is most definitely the time. This special video contains the director's (Steven Spielberg's) cut of the classic movie. This edition is digitally re-mastered from newly restored film elements and has a few extra goodies, such as one of those not-as-incredibly-interesting-as-you-thought-they'd-be 'making of' features. Richard Dreyfuss puts in an excellent portrayal of down-and-out Roy Neary who has an out-of this world experience with some extra-terrestrial visitors, which leads to the mothership paying a visit to Earth. The video also includes interviews with the stars and the crew, which makes this a must-have for the serious *Close Encounters* fan.

ANGELA HARROD

Rated PG-13.

Available Now on Video and DVD.

VIDEO CASSETTE



MIMIC

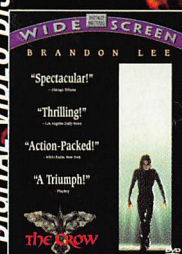
This insect-infested horror-thriller follows the story of a team of scientists who develop a cure for a deadly virus, which is killing Manhattan's children. Dr Tyler (Mira Sorvino) uses genetics to create a superbug to rid the city of the killer roaches. The film zips forward a few years where our heroes discover that the Tyler's creations have transformed into six ft bug-critters with a taste for flesh. Lots of gore, dark settings and human-insect mutations to keep you on the edge of your seat. The CG bug-monsters are spectacular, but the movie is the usual monster horror-fare.

ANGELA HARROD

Rated R.

Available Now on Video and DVD.

DIGITAL VIDEO DISC



THE CROW

The movie that made the late Brandon Lee a mainstream star, *The Crow*, is now available on DVD. Lee plays a guitarist who is murdered and rises from the grave. The rest of the film sees him disposing of his enemies in the usual way with plenty of pre-death one-liners to boot.

Rated R.

DVD enhancements include a French Language track and chapter search.

THE CROW

CITY OF ANGELS

The sequel, *City of Angels*, is not so great. It's around 90 minutes of the same gothic imagery and enemy execution, with no-name actors in the same action sequences. Although the DVD is an exclusive Director's Cut version, this seems a pretty poor excuse to cash in on the original.

ANGELA HARROD

Rated R.

DVD enhancements include a Spanish Language track and chapter search.

VIDEO CASSETTE



GATTACA

Imagine a world where everyone starts their life in a petri dish, and people are 'manufactured' and not born. Welcome to the cold, hard world of Gattaca. Ethan Hawke stars as Vincent in this dreary futuristic sci-fi thriller about a man who dares to defy a society bent on genetic perfection, and Uma Thurman plays the token love interest. In his quest to prove that there is no gene for the human spirit, Vincent assumes the identity of petri-superperson Jerome, who must battle against time and his enemies and achieve his lifetime goal of going into space. Will he make it? Will you care? Far too dreary and way too heavy to be enjoyed as entertainment.

ANGELA HARROD

Rated PG-13.

Available Now on Video and DVD.

STARSTRUCK TROOPERS AS STAR WARS STRIKES BACK



A long time ago... in an animation cel archive far, far away... a bored *Star Wars* fan called Kevin Rubio hatched a cunning plan conjured up to make it into Hollywood. After days of filming in the El Merage desert in California with a dozen of his chums, a marvelously witty *Cops* parody was born. The idea was simple; follow a squad of Imperial Stormtroopers around Tatooine and show the Dark Side of Policing the galaxy. The biting satire replaced oppressed ethnic groups with Jawas, and added excellently authentic-sounding voice-overs for the Stormtroopers themselves (complete with the respirator/communicator 'click'), and even featured as scene mysteriously cut from the original *Star Wars* movie; the exact cause of death of Luke's Aunt and Uncle. But this wasn't just some home video you could send to Bob Saget to make fun out of. Oh no. This would be a professionally filmed and edited affair with special effects, guaranteed to make every producer and agent gibber uncontrollably and call up Rubio to launch his career into the stratosphere.

And to Kevin's credit, he succeeded far beyond his expectations.

Firstly, when you're watching *Troops* (we've checked the quicktime movies from a *Star Wars* fan page at www.theforce.net, you're struck by just how over-the-top Kevin went. Immediately, you know that those Stormtrooper costumes were meticulously constructed to be indistinguishable from George's props. Secondly, the synch between the camera acting and voice-overs (a marvelous blend of rural colloquialism and devotion to the Empire in the accents) is perfectly aligned. Thirdly, the special effects are more astoundingly realistic than an episode of *Babylon Five*. When Captain Janyx Bach desperately covers up the fact that his squad has just executed a group of Jawas, you'll see Tie-Fighters bombarding a Sandcrawler in the background and the effect is startlingly real. Fourthly, this uses the same *Inner Circle* tune (*Bad Boys*) to add a humorous air of familiarity. These extra attentions to detail, coupled with guest appearances (an unreleased third episode features an uneasy encounter with a Bounty Hunter known as Boba Fett) and in-jokes (the 'droid' that the Jawas are apparently smuggling is Tom Servo from *Mystery Science Theater 3000*) make *Troops* the most entertaining short film since *South Park*. The cost of the operation? Around \$1200. Stunning. Check out the quick-times as soon as you can.



BLASTO SPEAKS!

PHIL HARTMAN

THE VOICE BEHIND BLASTO

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHIL HARTMAN ON GAMES, KIDS, FRYING ALIENS, AND THE FUTURE OF MULTI-MEDIA. I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS WHEN THE CALL CAME IN... PHIL HARTMAN ON LINE ONE...

By DAVE HALVERSON

Hey Phil! It's great meeting you. I'm getting ready to review *Blasto*...

What's happening with it? It was supposed to be out along time ago. What are they doing? Patching and fixing, or what?

They've tweaked the game engine quite a bit. The game play was a little sluggish so they did the right thing and held it back until they got it running optimally.

Oh good, I've been waiting for it of course. I have a nine year old son, I guess he's at the lower end of the target market, and I've been telling a lot of friends about it.

Now he can say his dad is *Blasto*!

Indeed! On *News Radio*, the writing staff are avid game players, it's kind of like a frat house on the set. Our producer Paul Simms is a young man of 30 years and lives to write, but they have our offices set up like some insane dorm. He's got all these Harvard grads in there playing around the clock.

See, it's spreading! Anyway, you should be very proud of *Blasto*.

You know, I'm just associated with this by accident. They decided they wanted a celebrity voice and I was offered the opportunity to do it. It's the kind of thing I've never done before. When I saw that the character had a kind of a retro 30s quality in design, well, I have this booming barrel-chested voice that is sort of a take off of a 30s radio announcer, Westbrook Vambora, and he had that voice, ya know... [Phil dives in to the character] "RUDOLPH HESS WAS CAPTURED IN ENGLAND THIS WEEK!". He did all the war correspondence and whatnot.

Ooh, you're good at that!

Yeah, one of my repertoire of voices...

I know, I watch you on *Leno* all the time, your *Clinton* cracks me up. Is Jay a genuinely nice guy?

Oh yeah, Jay is genuinely nice and warm, he goes overboard to make people feel comfortable and he's been a great friend to me. Ya know Letterman; I also like him very much, he's a completely different personality, more in the Johnny Carson mold; shy. He's a more private person. Jay is more of the politician, out there shaking hands, patting people on the back. Dave is more private, keeps more to himself. To each his own. I actually really like them both a lot. They have both been very good to me.

When you did *Blasto*, did you work off of a script, or did you wait until the game was far enough so that you could get a flavor for the character?

Well, I met some of the creators of the game before the actual session and they showed me some

prototype versions of the type of activities that *Blasto* did. They introduced me to this 3D element that I hadn't seen before.

Isn't it great, frying aliens left and right?

Yeah, and then I saw the drawings and character sketches and we zeroed in on vocal quality. I grilled them a lot about what it was like to do what they do. It is kind of a unique arena in entertainment that I hadn't really been exposed to, and I was really curious about it. A couple of the designers were just very young guys in their twenties. To answer your previous question, yes I did work from a script, but there was also a lot of room for improvisation and basically they let me say whatever I could think of... If I shot an alien, it might be scripted [Phil slips into *Blasto* voice]: "TAKE THAT YOU GREEN SLIME BALL!" ya know, but I'd also say, "OOH, THAT'S GONNA HURT, or THAT'S GONNA LEAVE A MARK... SORRY!". I mean, I recorded six solid hours of everything that *Blasto* could possibly say.

The coolest part is that *Blasto* says witticisms pertaining to the environment he's in. When I was trudging around *Uranus* and I saw that big blue bird, and you said "Now that's a big chicken", it was just the coolest.

That's my fondest hope, that people, apart from having fun with the game, get a chuckle here and there. I presume that every time someone plays the game, they're gonna hear things they've never heard before. I know I certainly did enough material. I don't know what percentage they used....

I think they used it all! It seldom repeats, I mean it is always fresh stuff. A real persona. *Blasto* could really take off, which leads me to another question... If *Blasto* was to make his way to an animated feature, or who knows where, would you stay on with the voice?

Oh, I would make every effort to. Even before I went to *Saturday Night Live*, I had done a lot of animation.... This is going back, but I was in an improv group called *The Groundlings* and I hooked up with Paul Reubens of *Pee-Wee Herman* fame. We did a stage show called *The Pee-Wee Herman Show* which was a staged version of what became *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*. At the end of our run at the Roxy theater in Hollywood, we taped it and it became an HBO special. It was that *Playhouse* atmosphere, all the bright colors and the puppets and everything... but it was for an adult audience. I did this character called Captain Carl. That was my entry into the world of animation. It turned out that not a lot of actors could do that voice because it gets hard on



the throat. It can lead to nodes and pallops and things like that if you don't do it right.

Sounds painful.

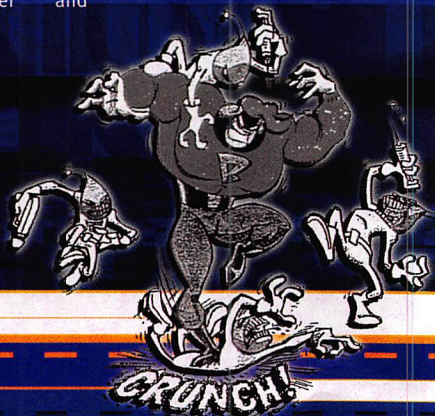
For some reason it never bothered me that much. I could talk that way all day long. So Hanna Barbara contacted me... a guy named Gordon Hunt who is incidentally the father of Helen Hunt. I've known Helen since she was a little kid.

She's gotta be happy with that Oscar, huh?

Yeah, she's a great lady. So Gordon cast me to do shows for Hanna Barbara, doing pirate voices, *Scooby Doo* and the *Smurfs* and lots of other shows. I started working for Hanna Barbara fairly regularly... this was around 1982 or 83 and then I did episodes of *Dennis the Menace*... I played Mr. Wilson and Henry Mitchell, on top of a lot of radio and voice over work. That lead to *Saturday Night Live*, which increased my profile dramatically. Then I got involved with *The Simpson's*... I've been doing Troy McClure and Lionel Hutz for several years, probably 50 episodes of those shows.

How do you land a gig like *Saturday Night Live*? Is it a casting thing? Is it a cattle call? Or is it that something where they call you specifically?

Well, I sort of had the inside track their because of *The Groundlings*. I had worked with John Lovitz who went to *Saturday Night Live* the year before I did. There was a year around 1985 where Lorne Michaels came back to the show after a five year absence and he re-cast. It was just one year... It was Lovitz, Dennis Miller, Robert Downey Jr. Anthony Michael Hall, Terry Sweeney and Nora Dunn. It was kind of an off-beat year. A few things worked, like Dennis Miller and



John Lovitz, but lots of it didn't, and then they decided to recast. Well they kept Lovitz and Miller and Nora Dunn and then they brought in a new cast which included me, Dana Carvey, Kevin Nealon, Vicky Jackson, Jan Hooks and a year later Mike Meyers and we brought the show out of a nose dive. I enjoyed the thrives, I mean it was truly the gig that changed my life, but it was because of (to answer your question) John Lovitz. When he found out they were recasting he said "you gotta consider Phil Hartman". He gave me a very glossy endorsement and hence he got me an audition. John came to my audition and we did some stuff together and it just happened to be at a time when I was ready to do the show. I was going through a divorce and the idea of leaving L.A. sounded appealing to me. The previous year when John was cast, I probably wouldn't have wanted to do it.

In *Saturday Night Live*, you are out there, I mean right there with the audience, that's gotta be tough to do.

Well I think an improv or standup background gives you nerves of steel. You're not afraid of doing live television.

Do you think that interactive games and television will play a vital role in the future, and if it does will you participate in those genres? Is that something you think about as an actor... the whole multi-media thing that's coming around?

Absolutely, I mean I think it's just great. Games like this are pioneering into territories that we can only imagine. When you consider the advances in technology in the last 20 years, especially the last 15, it is amazing. We're gonna have hologram interactive entertainment where you can have hologram actors in the middle of your living room entertaining. It is just a matter of a few minor leaps in technology, and astounding things are going to be at our disposal. Many actors are concerned, if they're going to have artificial John Waynes, what's going to happen to me? Am I going to get any work? But I'm not worried about that at all. I feel so much that I am a part of an industry [the interactive entertainment industry] that is going to grow exponentially in the future. It's the right place to

be. Whatever people do to make a living they're going to have, fortunately in our society, leisure time and extra money. It's gonna go for diversion.

People are gathering at home more and more, getting involved in new forms of entertainment.

Yeah, I mean I watch my son... When I did *Blasto*, they sent me a Sony PlayStation. He already had Nintendo and the Phillips system.

Yikes, a CDI? Poor kid.

Now the PlayStation is the one he loves the most. I mean he just amazes me. We started out playing *Mortal Kombat* and things like that together.

Ooh! It will destroy his mind!

[Laughing] He is such a great kid. I'm not worried about anything like that. These game systems won't make up for bad parenting. If parents mess up a kid, he's gonna be messed up. I don't think these things cause violence or hostility or anything like that. I just think they're plain fun. My generation played 'Army'. I used to go down to the army surplus store and buy helmets and toy guns and we would go out in the fields and pretend to have skirmishes and battles and stuff... It's all the same thing. It's part of being human.

Right, it is part of being a kid.

How I would of loved to have had these things when I was a kid. I would have been on it!!

Well... we got 'em now!

Yeah [laughs]. I would really be excited about getting into interactive media in the future. It's a very exciting field.

You know you are in a good position, because with projects like *Toy Story* becoming more prominent; with computer generated characters, you have that voice. Voice and personality; being able to slip into character's is going to be a vital part of acting in the future. So you're sitting in the cat-bird seat right now.

Yeah, well that's the thing. You won't ever be able to synthesize the subtleties of expression... That's imparted into a performance. I shouldn't say never, but I really think it will always be more about writing and performance than about technology. And ya know the truth is, it will probably expand in all directions, and there will be all kinds of entertainment. Some of it completely robotic. And why not? Let's have it all. Let's keep people entertained and stimulated. Anyway, I'm glad you like the game Dave. That's good news for me. What else is out there in the 3D arena that is really shaping up to be something special?

Actually it's funny because you're up against another actor (Dana Gould). *Gex: Enter the Gecko* is the other big 3D title for the PlayStation right now and it's a great game. As far as *Gex's* personality is concerned, they didn't do quite as good of a job making him interact with the environments as they did with *Blasto* but it's pretty good. It's a fine line... a celebrity dub can either be a curse and something that you can turn on or off, or it can be something that truly adds to the game. *Blasto*, I think, is the first one where it truly adds to the game. I think people respect you a lot and I think that you are the most notable celebrity to do a game so far. I think it's gonna raise the bar.

I just did a movie for DreamWorks called *Small Soldiers* that's probably going to become a game. It's about these soldiers that literally shred a neighborhood and two suburban homes. One of them is mine and the other one belongs to a

character who's played by Kevin Dunn. Kristen Dunn plays my daughter and we're attacked by these *GI-Joe* type characters. The premise is, these new action figures that are supposed to be able to walk and talk, well they're going to be the new rage but they're implanted with the wrong computer chip. It's a code error, they get a chip that was supposed to go into an ICBM. And so they have this fuzzy logic self-destruct capability and they can build their own weapons. I play a guy that's just a neighborhood jerk who's a tool freak and they take a lawnmower and a tennis ball machine and a propane tank and they build a cannon that shoots flaming tennis balls.... [laughing] They have another thing that catapults saw blades.

That's great. That had to be a gas.

Oh, it was incredible. Rick Baker designed the characters and *Industrial Light and Magic* is doing all the special effects. They're saying it's going to be the big competition for *Godzilla* this summer.

Wow!

I didn't realize when I was doing it what a hot movie it was.

Well, you know, anything with the DreamWorks label is hot.

Yeah. With the GameWorks association, it's very likely small soldiers is going to end up some type of a game. It just shows that there's all this cross-fertilization going on in entertainment and Spielberg's a real techie. He's on top of all of it. More and more I'm looking to do things that my kids can relate to. A lot of what I've done, ya know, *News Radio* is adult oriented and they are not that entertained by it. *Small Soldiers* is gonna' blow my son away.

I bet he's got a Turbo Man!

[Laughing] Oh yeah!!

You got creamed in that one, huh?

Oh yeah.

Do you play PC games?

Yes. When I look at the capabilities of these flight simulators, it just blows my mind. For example, I can fly inside or outside the cockpit and when I target an enemy, I can input a mode by where the enemy stays in the middle of the screen and I can fly around him. It has this quality of being a movie that I'm making in real time.

And you don't get hurt when you crash!

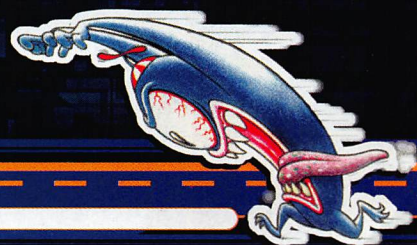
Indeed! How long have you been playing games, David?

About 13 years now. Believe it or not I got started selling used cars. I had a video game system stowed in my drawer. When the car lot was dead I would sit there and play games. I hooked up with so many people that had the same hobby, it just dawned on me that gaming was going to be huge, so I raised some cash and got a little mail order business started and it blossomed from there.

And now you're in the eye of the hurricane.

I can't thank you enough for your candor and valuable time Phil, it has been a pleasure.

Likewise, any time David, glad to help.



LOGIN INITIALIZED

BEGIN TRANSMISSION

COMING NEXT MONTH

What the Gamers' Republic staff are currently working on - all titles are subject to change...

All The Latest On

METAL GEAR SOLID

The first extended play of the Metal Gear Solid series...
We take Solid Snake on his first stealth mission... and return!

A continuing update on

TUROK 2

Don't know the difference between a Purr-lin and a Hunter?
You will after we daub magic mud on ourselves...
and take Fireseed on his initial jungle trek...



Also inside next issue

EARTHWORM JIM 3D
CRASH BANDICOOT 3
WILD 9s

GUN GRIFFON 2
BOMBERMAN HERO 64
MESSIAH

With excitement for Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* reaching fever-pitch, we thought we'd secure a proper little exclusive by being the first video game magazine to extensively playtest the actual game. No blurred video footage. No game shots from Japan. Our unrestricted access means we'll be tip-toeing our way through the initial levels, taking our own screenshots, detailing the cast of characters, and sitting down to chat with Hideo Kojima, the creator of the game itself. Join Solid Snake as the espionage operation heats up!

We're also off to visit the cream of Nintendo's developers over at Iguana in Austin, Texas, where the team responsible for Nintendo's biggest sequel, *Turok 2*, talk candidly about this highly-anticipated title. We'll also sit down for an extended play of the game, all to ensure that you're kept completely up-to-date regarding this potentially incredible title.

Of course, this is but two of the juicy surprises contained in our second edition. We hope you enjoyed the first issue, and we very much look forward to your company next time... Game Over.

:REPUBLIC OUT

**:TRANSMISSION
COMPLETE**

:LOGOFF

ISSUE 2:
STREET DATE:
JUNE 16TH, 1998

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